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IS YOUR JOURNEY REALLY UNNECESSARY?

WHILE the sun still shines miraculously, the shops are full of fruit and unemployment remains at a record low level, the British people find it difficult to take the crisis seriously. Most of the cuts will only come with the winter, and we seem determined to enjoy the Indian summer while we can. Yet it is essential that the Cripps plan, in all its austerity, should be accepted if disaster is to be avoided.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that the first cut which comes into force is one on which the wisdom of the Government's decision can legitimately be questioned even by those who press for still more drastic economies. The abolition of the basic petrol ration is, of course, being attacked by many critics for purely selfish reasons. But there are serious grounds for doubting, first, whether it will achieve the anticipated saving; secondly, whether enforcement will be possible; and thirdly, whether far larger savings in oil imports could not be achieved by other means which would cause less dislocation in our national life. It is these arguments and not the agitation of the vested interests which the Government should seriously consider.

The Government seems to have rashly assumed that the use of basic petrol is a luxury of the middle class and that an easy distinction can be made between essential and unessential journeys. In fact, some two million families run motor cars or motor bicycles; and there is a surprising number of skilled artisans who can afford a car or a motor bicycle because they service their own vehicle. In all these cases the abolition of the basic petrol ration, at a time when rail transport is being cut to a minimum and when the bus services are quite inadequate, will involve a disproportionate loss of time and efficiency.

The Government, on the other hand, can justify the abolition of the basic ration for two reasons. In the first place, out of the £9 millions which it is reckoned will be saved by economies both in civilian and Service use of petrol, no less than £7 millions is contributed by the abolition of the basic ration—at its recent rate of 1½ gallons per coupon. Obviously this is a substantial economy, well worth making. Even more important is the argument that, in contrast with the reduction of the basic ration, its total abolition makes possible a check on the proper use of E and S coupons. So long as some basic petrol is permitted, it is impossible to prove that E and S coupons are being illegitimately used for private purposes. The owner can always argue that this particular journey was consuming basic petrol. If, however, no basic ration is permitted, then any motorist can be challenged to show that any journey which he makes is essential. We believe that it was this argument that induced the Government to change its mind and to abolish the basic ration instead of reducing it drastically.

But there are serious doubts whether the advantages of the present plan outweigh its difficulties of application. To begin with, it is clear that hundreds of thousands of new demands for E and S coupons will now be made by owners whose circumstances have changed since the war. There are countless families who owing to the housing shortage have been forced to find a home far from their work and their shopping centre. It is impossible therefore to abolish basic petrol without giving a substantial part of the saving back in E and S coupons. Out of the £7 millions saved on the basic ration over £1 millions is likely to be lost by new supplementary allowances.

Moreover, the deluge of new applications will put an unbearable pressure on the Regional Petroleum Boards, and it is difficult to see how they can finish their job by the time required, the beginning of November. In considering the economy to be achieved, it must also be remembered that, human nature being what it is, those who obtain E and S coupons will now feel themselves justified in stretching their use to the furthest legal limits. It has already been conceded that they can go to church and can drop into the cinema or to a friend's house on the way back from an essential journey. Given such exceptions, enforcement, which was the main argument for abolishing basic petrol, becomes almost impossible. Inevitably, also, the number of "essential" journeys will grow steadily larger as each possessor of E and S coupons strives to make the best of his privileged position.

Finally, the case for total abolition is weakened by the Government's inability to give any precision to its promise that petrol economies will be effected in the Forces. On present estimates, out of £9 millions of total savings £7 millions are to be contributed by civilian car owners, and an unknown fraction of £2 millions by the Armed Forces. When we consider that the Armed Forces are using this year petrol to the tune of £32 millions (gross), the disproportion in the saving becomes almost absurd.

For these reasons we believe that the Government would do well to reconsider its decision. It has changed its mind so often on this subject that it can afford to do it once again. Administratively the reduction of the old basic ration by 50 per cent, which would entitle the car owner to 100 miles a month, would be far easier to fulfil since it would reduce the need for reassessing hundreds of thousands of claims.

Financially, the concession could be far more than offset by an increase in the economies envisaged for the Armed Forces. Most important of all, we should thereby avoid creating a state of mind like that in America under Prohibition. There is nothing worse than a Law whose infringement is tacitly condoned by public opinion.

The Paris Plan

If it were to be regarded simply as a "shopping list" of European requirements to be financed over the next four years by the U.S. Treasury, the Report of the Paris Committee of European Economic Co-operation would probably get short shrift at the hands of Congress. Europe's total dollar deficiency in 1948–51 is put at the formidable figure of £5,600 millions. It is considered that about £800 millions might be financed from sources such as the International Bank, and that Western Europe's favourable balance with the non-dollar area might amount in the four-year period to £700 millions. On the assumption (and it is a large one) that this favourable balance will be convertible into dollars, the net demand on the U.S. Treasury appears to be of the order of £4,100 millions; but this sum would presumably require upward revision if the Western European aid programme led to a further inflationary increase of American prices. The Report accordingly recognises that American assistance on such a scale cannot reasonably be expected unless Congress is presented not merely with a demand note from an Amalgamated Union of Beggars, but with convincing evidence that, if the United States sinks this immense sum in financing the reconstruction of Western Europe, the recipients will co-operate in undertaking to increase their own productivity and their eventual ability economically to stand on their own feet. Interest, therefore, centres on the proposals which the Report contains for self-help. The promises are large. By 1951 there is to be an increase in Western Europe of 33 per cent. in coal, and 40 per cent. in electricity, output; steel production is to rise by 80 per cent.; oil refining capacity is to be developed to two and a half times the pre-war level; and inland transport facilities are to be expanded to carry a 25 per cent. greater load than in 1938. Currencies are to be stabilised and conditions of "internal financial equilibrium" restored; measures are to be taken to secure "progressive relaxation of import restrictions . . . and to transfer surplus labour." There is to be common planning of hydro-electric developments based on the Alps and on German lignite deposits; standardisation of mining and electrical supplies is to be "encouraged"; the possibility of pooling railway trucks is to be "examined"; and steel-producing countries are to "exchange information" about their programmes of development.

Western European Co-operation

The references in the Paris Report to "financial stability" have, of course, a familiar ring. The cynic, remembering the aftermath of the Brussels and Genoa Conferences after World War I, may be tempted to say: "This is where we came in." Nevertheless, if the undertakings to which the 16 signatory nations have subscribed are sincere, the constructive proposals in the Report represent, in intention, a significant step towards the integration of European planning. Those who share our view that prosperity in Western Europe cannot be restored by a series of uncorrelated national plans must necessarily applaud. Two questions, however, remain to be answered. First, even if it be assumed that the political and commercial problems which we discuss on later pages can be solved, will the U.S. Government, in its role of financial god-parent, be willing to see good American dollars being used by Western Europe to promote forms of economic planning which are clearly essential for the success of the Paris plan, but which would be regarded in Washington and Wall Street as "un-American"? Secondly, are the production targets on which the plan rests realistic? Until the full text of the Report is available, it is difficult to form a final judgment on global Western European figures. The contribution of Western Germany is, to begin with, a big variable. It is understood, however, that so far as this country is concerned, the Plan presupposes an increase in British steel production by 1951 from 12.7 million to 15 million tons, and an expansion in electrical generating capacity from 9 million to over 13 million kw. Can these increases be achieved and sustained—to say nothing of our ability to raise our exports, under the Cripps plan, to 160 per cent. of the 1938 level by the end of 1948—if British coal exports are to rise (as promised in the Paris Report) from 6 million tons next year to 29 million tons in 1951? This export target is based on the assumption that British coal output will rise to 250 million tons a year. If the aggregate estimates for Western Europe as a whole are framed on similar assumptions, the signatories are at least not lacking in optimism.

Interim Aid?

Whatever be the fate of the long-range Marshall Plan, it now seems certain that the U.S. Administration will take immediate steps to "save" the frail Governments of France and Italy. In American eyes the recent massive strikes by agricultural and metal workers in Northern Italy were a portent: the maintenance in power of "reliable" Signor de Gasperi is seen as dependent on his ability to find dollars and thus alleviate the growing scarcity of consumers' goods and soaring prices, against which the strikes, culminating in last week-end's threatening demonstrations in Italian cities, were staged in protest. Still more serious is the situation in France. Whereas perhaps a couple of hundred million dollars might enable de Gasperi to "hold things together" until the spring, the Government of M. Ramadier seems likely to be swept away, at no distant date, by the combined forces of food shortage, Treasury bankruptcy and currency collapse. To avert this *dénouement* it is thought in Washington that France must have immediate assistance, either in dollars or relief food shipments, on a large scale. Politically it would be too perilous for American interests in Europe to allow the swimmer to sink twice before throwing the lifebelt. Whether M. Ramadier's will be the hand which catches it is doubtful. It is still more doubtful whether aid can be effectively used by any Government which excludes the best-disciplined and most dynamic party in France.

American Reactions

The publication of the Paris Report has been seriously but not enthusiastically received in America. Most comment is guarded because of the incompleteness of the summaries. The size of the United States contribution has clearly been a great shock. Rumours of immense sums demanded had long circulated; but the American public now feels it has woken up to find a nightmare come true. All the commentators close to the Republicans in Congress insist that the figure is far too large, and predict that Congress will cut it by 50 per cent. The more liberal press and some Congressmen of like mind have expressed great disappointment at the lack of detail in the plans for mutual economic co-operation in Europe, and the *Washington Post* is typical in its regret that there is no "Declaration of Interdependence" which might strike the American imagination. But in general there is a recognition of the proposition that unaided Europe will lapse into "chaos and Communism." Presumably the drafters of the report calculated that, when their bucket of cold water is poured on the red-hot attitude in Congress towards Communism, enough steam will be generated to get the machine working.

Truman's Choice

Secretary Marshall is still trying to persuade Mr. Truman of the necessity of an early special session of Congress. It is not unnatural that the President wishes that this cup might pass from him. Congress is dominated by the Republican Opposition, and he knows that if he calls a session to obtain funds for European relief he will have to deal also with various vote-getting demands such as income tax reduction. Two issues dominate the American mind, the Communist threat and the rise of prices. On the whole, more voters are concerned with the latter, so that the Administration will have to meet the surging argument that European relief is too expensive because it will further raise food prices. This is Senator Taft's line—the line of "business as usual," which appeals to many Republicans and to a wide section of the country. Its supporters conceal their unwillingness to do anything to meet the twin problems of prices and relief by calling for "voluntary rationing," which in view of the public's wartime reaction to involuntary rationing would probably raise consumption levels. All these domestic problems will escape from Pandora's Box if the President summons a special session. The State Department will also find its hands tied by Congressional advice. A powerful group led by Senator Bridges with some support from ex-Ambassador Kennedy and Harold Stassen, will try to ensure that, if America grants any funds to foreign countries, it shall exact strict conditions. In particular, there is a move to call the political tune in the British Zone of Germany, and to "enforce" efficiency on the British coal mines. Nevertheless, the Department favours an immediate session to "save" France and Italy from Communism; Britain can last through the winter on gold and her investments, but dollars or grain must be found by mid-November for other Western European countries. Eventually the President must himself decide each issue, aware that if he asks too much he may get nothing; if too little, the whole basis of his policy may fail.

Deadlock in Austria

In a despatch from Vienna, which we print on a later page, a correspondent examines the question whether Austria can ever stand on her own feet. The more immediate question is whether the Great Powers are going to give Austria a chance to try to do so. The Austrian Treaty Commission, to which the Moscow Conference last March entrusted the task of unravelling the knots of Big Four differences before the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers in November, appears to have reached complete deadlock. The chief questions which the Commission had to answer were: What privately owned enterprises in Austria should be recognised as "German assets," and hence be transferable to the Soviet Union as reparations? Should "German assets" properly be held to include State property created by the Germans during their occupation? What should be the status of enterprises in Austria after their transfer to Soviet ownership? The Commission has been unable to answer any of these questions. Differences as to the interpretation of the term "German asset" appear to have been narrowed; but the British and the American delegates, who have both now left Vienna, were emphatic in refusing to recognise the Russian claim to State properties, and they insisted that property transferred to Soviet ownership must in future enjoy no privileges as compared with other foreign companies in Austria. In these circumstances the Commission has failed to produce any Report likely to assist the Foreign Ministers next November, and the conclusion of an Austrian Treaty seems as remote as peace terms for a United Germany.

The Trouble in India

As always in India, communal riots in one area have had their repercussions in others. Outwards from the centre of the disorders and massacres spread the atrocity stories, often gaining in horror the further they move from the point of origin. When they reach cities with minority populations hundreds of miles away, the passions of hate and revenge are intensified among the majority populations, and fear is correspondingly engendered among the minorities. The danger in India is that the authorities may not be able to damp down the initial outbreaks and restore order and calm in the affected regions of the Punjab before outbreaks begin in the United Provinces, Calcutta, Bombay and Karachi. Their task is made more difficult by the clamour of their own supporters for action—a clamour which is accompanied by accusations of bad faith against the officials and soldiers of the other side. In their anxiety to assure their respective communities that all possible is being done to protect co-religionists across the border, the leaders of Pakistan are open to the temptation of declaring that massacres in districts where they are not responsible are deliberately provoked by the Government of India, and vice versa. If this process is not stopped, relations between India and Pakistan may become permanently estranged. Hence the suggestion of the Pakistan Government that the United Nations should be asked to appoint twelve observers to study conditions on both sides of the border is a good one. The presence of neutrals might well do much to dissipate increasing suspicions and ensure that the officials of both the Dominions maintain the highest impartiality in the measures taken to quell the troubles. Meanwhile it may be noted as the view of a responsible British-owned newspaper like the *Statesman* of Calcutta that both Dominions are doing their best in a situation in which "the Governments of India and Pakistan might have been excused if they had lost their heads." In fact they have tackled the problem with energy and vigour devising one expedient after another. The repercussions from the dislocation of communications and life in the Punjab will last long, but there is some reason to hope that the worst has now been reached. If the Ministers of both Governments act with restraint and eschew wild and provocative statements, they will survive this first terrible test of their rule.

Planning by Paralysis

The steps so far announced by Mr. Isaacs for correcting by "direction" the mal-distribution of Britain's manpower are gingerly. The eels and butterflies, the spivs and drones, will still tread their primrose path to the black market; men and women released from the Forces will still be free to drift into unessential occupations; and it is not apparently intended to conduct any comb-out of persons actually employed, no matter how ill-adapted to the crisis their employment may be. Direction is to apply only to men between 18 and 50 and childless women between 18 and 40 who go to a Labour Exchange for a "wage-earning" job. They may be directed, for a minimum period of six months, to an essential occupation; but only single men and unmarried women between the ages of 20 and 40 will normally be directed to any work outside the range of daily travelling distances from their home. This will limit considerably the extent to which unemployed labour can be effectively redeployed. First, however, labour has got to become unemployed; and, as a means of creating unemployment, unessential trades will be denied priority in allocations of fuel and raw materials. In other words, manpower is to be redistributed by inducing, over a not yet clearly defined sector of industry, a species of creeping paralysis. This will be a slow-acting process. From its results essential industries are unlikely to gain many useful recruits in the near future. Against this, application of this "limited direction" is likely to cause a good deal of resentment. The minority—and, unless the Board of Trade is surprisingly ruthless in allocations of raw materials, it will be a small minority—who will be affected by direction will undoubtedly protest that they are being called upon to make sacrifices of convenience, if not of money, while large numbers of persons employed in uneconomic occupations not dependent on any raw material—to say nothing of the whole class of persons living on rentier incomes—make no contribution whatever towards meeting the national crisis.

Extra Hours in the Mines

The public may well have been puzzled by reports in the press of last Tuesday's meeting between the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers. It had been understood, before the meeting, that the Board and the Union had tentatively come to an agreement on the issue of the extra half-day or its equivalent. The very sensible decision had, in fact, been taken that it would be best to leave it to the people on the spot to determine in each area whether the better solution would be to work a Saturday shift or to add half-an-hour to the length of the other working days. To leave districts to work out plans for extra hours would, indeed, have been an important step towards getting more effective regional negotiating machinery into being, and thus correcting the Coal Board's present tendency towards over-centralisation in its relation with the miners. Instead, however, of last Tuesday's meeting ending, as expected, with an announcement that an agreement on longer hours with district variations had been ratified, no official statement was issued; the press was left to draw its own conclusions. As a result, the silence was interpreted in a confusing number of different ways. Some newspapers actually suggested that in view of the rise in the latest published weekly total of coal output to 3.9 million tons, the view was now held by the N.U.M. that no extra time need, after all, be worked. Since even the modest 1947 coal target requires a weekly output of 4.2 million tons for the remainder of this year, such an argument would be untenable; and we do not believe that it has been put forward by the N.U.M. The truth appears to be that the Coal Board's provisional agreement with the N.U.M. had been vetoed by the Cabinet, which is in the embarrassing position of feeling itself bound by Mr. Bevin's pledge to Mr. Clayton that he would impose on the British miners an eight-hour working day without overtime payments. The N.U.M. will never willingly abandon its stipulation that the extra hours which the miners have voluntarily offered to work, either on Saturdays or on other days, must be treated as overtime, thus preserving the principle of the hard-won Five-Day Week. The miners, moreover, suspect—not perhaps without reason—that if they agreed to work, without overtime, an eight-hour shift, Monday to Friday, and if (as they contend would be the case) this particular form of lengthened hours failed to produce much more coal, then the next "pledge" which the U.S. State Department would obtain from Mr. Bevin would be to impose a six-day week.

Is There a Housing Policy?

When cuts in house-building were first announced, the main reason given was that local plans had outrun the capacity to get them carried out with the available manpower and, to a smaller extent, the materials that could be spared. This was a valid reason for concentration on getting through with the projects already under way in preference to starting on new ones before they were achieved. But there came the sharp shock of the dollar crisis, and at the same time the people who had been all along hostile to the housing programme on grounds of capital scarcity came in with louder demands for the curtailment of constructional projects. So now we have the Building Technicians expressing alarm at "proposals for cutting down the programme of new housing, schools and buildings for social services" and the Croydon Housing Committee calling a citizens' meeting to explain the serious effects of a ban on new houses except for key workers in a borough which has already a waiting list of nearly 14,000 applicants. In this situation, we are still without any indication from the Government of the extent of the cutting-down proposed. There are only rumours of sharp divisions about what is to be done. It is, however, just as essential to explain to the public what they are to expect about houses as it is to give the clearest possible information about the character and effects of the export drive. Timber shortage is a reason for altered methods of construction, rather than for cutting down. If manpower is the problem, how low down should housing come in the priority list? If it is a question of reduced capital expenditure, should not housing be among the last forms to be sacrificed?

A THIRD REGION ?

Mr. Vyshinsky may have fortified the Russian public by his denunciation of American and British war-mongering. If his indictment fell flat even among his admirers in the West, that was partly because Soviet newspapers are at least as misleading about the West as American or British are about Russia, and partly because Mr. Vyshinsky remains obstinately unable to believe that the newspapers in the Democracies can be free from Government dictatorship. Similarly, non-partisan members of the Assembly—and many of the fifty Member-States are still desperately anxious to avoid joining either the American or the Soviet camp—were not likely to be moved when Mr. Vyshinsky and Mr. Marshall abused each other for mutual obstruction on the atomic bomb Commission. Again, on the issue of Greece, Mr. Vyshinsky's retort that the Greeks would long ago have settled their own internal situation if there had been no British or American intervention is more than cancelled out by Mr. Marshall's argument that the United Nations is rendered farcical if the U.S.S.R. uses the veto to prevent the Council from carrying into effect its desire to send a permanent Committee to watch over the Greek frontiers. Mr. Vyshinsky can argue that America, in this and in other things, is merely waging a cold war against the U.S.S.R. and its allies; that America complains about the veto just because it is Russia's only defence; and that the United States does not need the veto because it is sure of the majority. This is all quite true, but the fact remains that, unless there is a readiness to accept majority decisions on day-by-day matters, the United Nations automatically comes to a stop.

Such *tu quoque* arguments can be continued until the Greek Kalends—or the next world war. They are the public and therefore qualified expression of an apparently irreconcilable hostility. Statesmen speaking at public conferences do not express their whole minds even when they are spitting venom. Necessarily they argue about current controversies; their long-distance fears and intentions cannot be openly discussed. If Mr. Marshall were entirely frank he would have said, we take it, that America means to fight Communism everywhere and in every possible way; that its plan is to mobilise all the smaller Powers into an anti-Soviet alliance under the protection of American power; that, as an immediate step, he prepares to bypass the Soviet veto by setting up a permanent Commission of the Assembly, thereby compelling the U.S.S.R. either to retire, isolated, from the United Nations or to allow her bluff to be called and accept an amendment to the U.N. Constitution which would knock the veto weapon from her hands. According to expert American calculation the Soviet Union will not recover from the last war for at least another ten or fifteen years, so that a resolute anti-Soviet offensive now may have time finally to deter Russia from war or, alternatively, of defeating her if war does eventually occur. With this in mind, Mr. Marshall might add, America seeks to prevent economic collapse in Europe which would facilitate the growth of Communism. She hopes, by rebuilding Western Europe on a capitalist and pro-American basis, both to save U.S. economy by creating an export market for the American goods and, by re-equipping the heavy industry of the Ruhr and Rhineland, to create a strong anti-Soviet basis three thousand miles from Manhattan.

Mr. Vyshinsky's case, if he too were to speak his real mind, would be that the Soviet Union, because of its present weakness, is more anxious to avoid war than the United States, but equally believes in preventing it by strengthening its alliances and refusing to appease its adversaries. Soviet policy, like American, is based not on conquest but on permeation. American permeation means victory for the American way of life by expenditure of dollars; Soviet permeation means victory for Communism when the breakdown of dollar economy breeds revolutionary sentiment. Thus Russian policy must be to hold on to strategic positions under her frontiers, to maintain docile governments in neighbouring States and to create, as soon as maybe, a strong Soviet Federation which will resist dollar penetration and, if necessary, hold together in case of war. Soviet hopes of avoiding war depend on an American slump and a breakdown of Western capitalism. Thus in regard to the crucial question of the Marshall Plan, on which may depend the issue whether Western Europe will ultimately fall into the American or the Soviet sphere, Russian propaganda and theory maintain two incompatible but separately very intelligible propositions. The Americans, according to Moscow, are building Western Europe as a hostile bloc dangerous to peace and directed against the Soviet Union. At the same time the Communist thesis is that nothing will come of the Marshall Plan. They cannot believe that it is in the nature of American capitalism to invest money without financial return nor in the nature of sovereign capitalist States to form economic or political federations. The Marshall Plan is therefore very dangerous, but also quite certain to collapse.

Here is a sharply posed and insoluble conflict, and Mr. McNeil was perfectly right in declaring that no international organisation could succeed except on the basis of certain assumptions such as that " no nation has a monopoly of the truth; no nation is omniscient; no nation is omnipotent; no reasonable nation can be expected at all times to have its view accepted by other nations." Mr. McNeil might have added still another assumption that also applies equally to the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. No organisation, whether or not it calls itself the United Nations, can lead to anything but war if it is dominated by two Powers which agree in believing that the One World they both postulate can only be born as the result of the destruction of the other. No doubt the rulers of America and Russia to-day both desire to avoid war, but both of them contemplate it as a possibility and use its ultimate threat as an instrument of policy. Both of them fear war but still believe that something might be gained from it. To the Russians, war may be the pains of parturition without which the Communist world cannot be born. In America, where war still suggests a boom rather than a limitless catastrophe, it may seem, as a prominent American said the other day, a better alternative than the loss of private enterprise.

To smaller nations, whose obliteration by atomic or bacteriological warfare is calmly discussed by experts as the incidental result of a third world war, the problem must be to avoid absorption in either of these two rival world systems. In Western Europe the crucial question is the possibility of creating a third " region " capable of standing on its own feet within the United Nations. Any other solution is catastrophic. We cannot do without dollars; even French Communists do not deny that they would welcome American aid if they were included in the French Government which received it. American help in rebuilding is essential; everything depends on the terms on which it is offered. The countries of Western Europe cannot agree to a position of complete dependence on American Big Business which would rebuild an aggressive Germany, condemn them to destruction in the event of war, deprive them of the chance of resuming trade relations with Eastern European countries from which they used to draw a substantial portion of their food, and force on them an intolerable economic and political tutelage. It is good news, then, that the Paris Conference has agreed on some measures of self-help; that in addition to the " shopping list " it has evolved constructive suggestions which originate in Europe and which make for greater independence and which are accepted by the United States. As against this, we have to deplore the initial decision to leave the planning of Western Germany to exclusive Anglo-American conversations. The basis of an independent European plan should have been an Anglo-French agreement for an internationalised Ruhr. As it is, the French are highly alarmed and the Paris plan goes forward with the fatal defect of leaving unsettled the central problem of European reconstruction.

ARMAMENTS—THE REAL COST

We can work out the strain imposed on our economy by our present Defence policy in two ways. We can determine the real cost of our Armed Forces by dissecting the Service and Civil Estimates, and then expressing the total cost of the Forces as a percentage of our national income. Alternatively we can find the total employed both in and by the Services and compare this with the total labour force of the nation. This second method is less accurate because it is impracticable to reckon in those who are indirectly employed in Defence. Thus we can find out the number of civilian telephone operators, say, who work in a Naval Telephone Exchange, but not the number of extra Post Office employees who must work at say, Portsmouth to deal with the letters and telephone calls of the Navy.

The significance of the figure is, first, the indication it gives of the direct loss of labour to production—the concealed unemployment of Defence—and, secondly, the estimate which it makes possible of the inflationary pressure caused by the Armed Forces. The man or woman in uniform produces nothing for consumption at home nor for export, nor, generally speaking, does the man or woman who works for him. Since, however, soldiers, sailors and airmen must be fed and clothed, whether in the Services or not, in order to get the true figure of our concealed unemployed we must subtract from the gross total of those working for the Services an estimate of those who produce food, clothing and the like. The net total will be the figure for those, both in and out of uniform, who are competing for goods they can do nothing to produce. The inflationary factor which they represent is startling.

Here is an estimate of the number of civilians who will be working full time on Defence on 1st October, 1947:—

Civil Service Staff in the three Service Departments	100,000
Industrial and other non-clerical workers employed by the three Services (excluding those engaged on manufacture)	175,000
Ministry of Supply civil servants, industrial and other personnel including those engaged on Service Research and Development (other than production)..	75,000
Defence element covered by Civil Department Votes. (Ministry of Labour—call up; Home Office—Civil Defence; Foreign Office—Control Commission (military elements only) Ministry of Defence—combined Services; Secret Service, etc.).. ..	60,000
Service Works (Building and civil engineering by Navy, Army and Air Force and the Service side of the Ministry of Supply)	60,000
Distributive, welfare and other miscellaneous industrial and clerical workers (including N.A.A.F.I., other Service canteens and hostels, exclusively Service banking, etc.)	40,000
Manufacturing directly for Service needs (in private industry and in Ordnance Factories and Naval Dock Yards and Establishments)	450,000
Less those manufacturing Service cloth, clothing and boots, food, tobacco and other consumer goods	*40,000*
Net Total	920,000
Add Uniformed Element	1,200,000
Total net strength in the Forces and those employed directly by the Forces as on 1st October, 1947	2,120,000

How has it come about that this astounding total is not more generally realized? " It is calculated," said the White Paper on Defence, " that to meet the production and related requirements of the Services during the financial year 1947-1948 a labour force of approximately 450,000 will be required." This figure has been generally accepted as the total civilian element directly employed by the Services; in fact, strong internal evidence in the White Paper shows that, far from being an attempt to estimate the total civilian element employed, it is derived from the total of 429,000 employees of insurable age who were engaged in manufacturing for the Forces in March 1947 and has been adjusted to 450,000 so as to include those engaged in manufacture but not included in the category of employees of insurable age. Quite clearly it excludes civil servants in the Service Ministries (though this total is easily obtainable from Treasury returns) and, more important still, it excludes the civilian element who are not directly engaged in manufacturing for the Services. They too can be calculated from the Service Estimates. They include civilians regimentally employed, storemen and labourers in Ordnance depots, sailors in the " R.A.S.C. Fleet," civilian mechanics and maintenance personnel in R.A.F. and R.E.M.E. workshops, civilian instructors, War Department and Air Ministry, Civil Police, telephone operators, cooks, dental mechanics, rifle-range markers, caretakers, messengers, groundsmen and mess attendants.

The total given in the table is a conservative estimate which allows for a considerable reduction of numbers since the date of the Estimates, for the exclusion of all those who might be classified in manufacturing industry and all who might represent local labour employed abroad.

The final figure, even when written down as low as possible, still represents a frightening total. It is far in excess of the 1,514,000 which is the latest figure for our labour force manufacturing for export. It makes the Forces by far our largest industry, employing almost twice as many as agriculture and fishing and nearly three times as many as coal mining. The strength of the Services and those working for them even exceeds the combined total of those working in commerce and finance, professional and personal service, entertainments, catering, laundries, and other similar industries.

The total wages bill for the Services and those working for them is equally frightening, for it can hardly be less than £450 million. The Minister of Labour's White Paper on " Economic Considerations effecting relations between Employers and Workers " estimated the inflationary gap at £1,000 million. If that is so, our present Defence policy is likely, with the further consumer cuts now proposed, to impose a fatal inflationary pressure. Moreover, the Forces strain our economy not only by the labour they withdraw from productive industry. They cripple us even more by their excessive demand for dollar goods, like petrol, their quite disproportionate use of available productive machinery and of research facilities, and their huge calls on agricultural land and on over strained services, like transport and the Post Office.

It is useless to think in terms of a 50,000 or even a 100,000 cut. Wartime supplies are running down and, unless the uniformed element is substantially reduced, any economy effected will be offset by an increase in those manufacturing for the Services. What is long overdue is a remodelling of our Defence policy so as to reduce our Armed Forces as quickly as possible to about 650/700,000, which will be the maximum number available when the National Service Act comes into full operation. To achieve any substantial effect the total at which we should aim is a reduction of half a million in uniformed personnel, which would involve a consequent reduction of about a quarter of a million in the civilian element. This would still leave Defence our largest industry, would still give us Armed Forces 60 per cent. greater than we possessed before the war and would still provide 100,000 more men under arms than we shall have under National Service. Is it the General Staff argument that this figure is too small for our effective defence?

Geoffrey Bing

A LONDON DIARY

Raymond Mortimer, who has been Literary Editor of this journal for the last ten years, declares that it is time that he had a rest from working on the manuscripts of other people. He would like, if possible, to improve his own prose style. He is handing over the position of Literary Editor to V. S. Pritchett, who will be assisted by T. C. Worsley. He is taking a month's holiday and then coming back to this journal, not in the capacity of Literary Editor, but to write the Books in General page. The team, which has made the literary side of this journal famous, is thus, I am glad to say, maintaining its unity.

* * *

Sir Charles Darwin, Director of the National Physical Laboratory and formerly scientific adviser to the War Office, has been telling the Atomic Scientists' Association that the atom-bomb is not a "good weapon." He ranked high-explosive worst, gas the next and the atom "less worst." He could not see how the atom-bomb could help an army to advance or occupy enemy territory. But who said it could? The atom-bomb is no good for a preparatory bombardment; it would only produce super Cassinos, road-blocks in the way of the advancing armies. The effect of atom-bombing would be the same, on a vaster scale, as the effect of Air Force intervention in the Battle of Caen when the battlefield was found to be impassable for the victorious troops. As for occupation, atomic attack would produce a radioactive Ruhr on a larger scale, lethal even for the victors. Field-Marshal Montgomery and the Chiefs of Staff would certainly agree that the atom-bomb is not a tactical weapon (otherwise the traditional Services become nonsense), but it would be criminal lunacy if people, particularly in these blitz-vulnerable islands, allowed themselves to be deceived by this euphemistic talk. If it is not a tactical weapon it would be, against this or any densely populated country, a decisive strategical weapon. Directed against our cities and industrial centres, atomic bombardment would gut us as a nation and, in the totality of a completely irresponsible war, occupation would be a refinement to be dispensed with. And, of course, Darwin was also right in saying that bacterial warfare is by far the most terrifying of them all. But why in dealing with war put the horrors as alternatives? Add them all up—bacterial warfare, high-explosive, gas, and the atomic-bomb (in any order)—and the answer is that the Darwin of this generation is discussing the Extinction of the Species.

* * *

La Guardia, "The Little Flower," has passed into American legend. His flamboyant personality, his love of capering in the limelight of public life and his tempestuous energy made him the gadfly of American politics. But he was a gadfly who stung to some purpose. He cleaned up New York corruption. He routed Tammany and in 12 years of honest administration as Mayor, with the support of organised Labour, he put through reforms and public works which will endure. He was the big-hearted champion of the underdog whether on his native East Side or, as Director-General of Unrra, in the starving world. There was method in his clowning. When, as Director - General of Unrra, he breezed into the F.A.O. Conference at Copenhagen, he made the official American flesh creep with his gospel of "take human lives off the ticker-tape" and his pantomime of the Chicago wheat-exchange. In a broadcast from a crowded auditorium in Washington, he was asked whether it was true that only America had given any real aid to Unrra. Leaning confidentially over the mike he replied: "If I wasn't on the air, I'd say that was just goddammed, lousy isolationist propaganda." During the war, he used to "bawl out" Mussolini in broadcasts to Italy phrased, I'm told, in excruciatingly bad but effective Italian. His weekly broadcasts as Mayor used to range over everything from municipal business to cookery-recipes and the readings of the serial "comics" which were being held up by a newspaper delivery-strike. Like all great clowns he moved people to tears as well as laughter and his political strength, in the service of genuine ideals, was that he knew how to get at the sentimental heart of America.

* * *

I have been slow to join in protests about political trials in Eastern Europe because these protests are too often inspired by ignorance or prejudice. Quite often those who protest seem not even to know that in the Balkans, or in S. America, changes of regime are habitually marked by some degree of "terror"; they do not protest against the frequent and equally unjust political trials in other parts of the world, and they do not understand that the Fascist reaction in Eastern Europe is a real and menacing thing which does conspire and murder and threaten renewed war. Having said so much, I must repeat that the execution of Petkov is an evil and dishonest affair. It is part of a pattern which is now spreading across Eastern Europe. If all organised criticism or opposition is treated as "treachery," it becomes impossible for either the Western observer or, more important, for the citizen of the country involved, to discriminate between treason and honest criticism. The result is that it is inevitably assumed that the political trials in Poland and other eastern European countries are all "frame-ups."

* * *

A remarkable feature of the Conference on Asia that is being held at the School of Oriental Studies (Malet Street, W.C.1) on Saturday and Sunday, September 27th and 28th, is that so many of those taking part have picked up their knowledge of Asia as a result of strange experiences during the war. Some are British officers who dropped by parachute into remote parts of Indonesia; some worked as coolies and with coolies survived the lethal servitude of the "jungle railway"; some fought in Burma; one officer knows a lot about Japan because he served with the War Crimes Commission in Tokio. How many young Englishmen learnt in the war to look at Asia from quite a new angle was revealed by the astonishing response to a letter published in this journal in 1945, suggesting that British soldiers who wanted to keep in touch with Asiatic movements should communicate with the Union of Democratic Control. The signatories included the Secretary of the Union of Democratic Control, which is primarily responsible for calling this Conference, and Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, M.P., who is its Hon. Secretary. Many of those who answered this letter will be present at the Conference, expertly equipped to discuss such issues as the wars in Indonesia and Viet-Nam with Asiatics who are personally involved in the struggles. On both sides there is a realisation that the relations of the West and the new revolutionary Asia, have to be worked out afresh.

* * *

It was a triumph to get the team of Soviet chess masters for a match in Britain. The only fly in the ointment was that they arrived tired out. This was the fault of the Foreign Office which was just too slack to treat them as the very V.I.P.s they are. They travelled in Russian planes to Berlin; the British could find no air transport for them and they came to this country in a troop train without sleepers and sat up all night. However, they seemed not unduly put out; they have proved excellent company and are on the best of terms with their hosts. They have also played chess with their usual overwhelming brilliance. It was exciting for an enthusiastic amateur like myself to see these masters in the flesh, and discover that men like Keres and Lilienthal are still young. No one expected the British to win many games, but the experts tell me that they are not dissatisfied. I am told by those closely in touch that many of the younger British players show quite remarkable promise. One of them, Gordon Crown, aged eighteen, scored one of the two British victories, defeating Kutov in the first round of the match.

* * *

Here, reproduced precisely, is the text of an anonymous communication that has reached me this week:

> So you have given in to the Yid-agitation.
>
> But the fight against the stinking Yids will go on.
>
> There is only one man in the Cabinet who stands up to the Yids. You and all the others are Yid paid.
>
> We shall get rid of the filthy Yids and all their underlings.
>
> Up Mosley. Up Bevin. Perish Judah.

Such a juxta-position of names is of course wickedly unfair, but it is well for the Government to know how it appears to the lunatic fringe.

Critic

THE PASSIONATE SPIV TO HIS LOVE

Come spiv with me and be my spove*
And we will all the pleasures prove
That markets black and rackets bring;
Thou shalt not lack for anything.

And we will sit in drone-like state
Within a well-sprung Chrysler eight,
And as the bees suck where they choose
So shall we sip blackmarket booze.

Thou shalt not queue yet shalt thou see
Food manna-like rain down on thee
To tempt the taste and fill the belly;
And perfumes by Schiaperelli.

And I will get thee on the side
Sweet trimmings for thy female pride,
A wardrobe full as thou couldst wish
Of garments coupon-free and swish;

A winter coat of choicest fur
And nylons spun like gossamer;
Thou'lt go as sweet as any bride,
Me in my drape suit by thy side.

Attendant spivs shall ply the barrow
Through London's streets both wide and narrow
To ease the toils of thy housewifery
With a percentage from their spivvery;

And keep us safe from rivals' raids
With their protective razor blades.
If these delights thy mind may move,
Come spiv with me and be my spove.

Geoffrey Parsons

* *The female of the species.*

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to J. R. Espir.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Mr. Ivor Novello's musical play *Perchance to Dream* . . . has been seen twice a week for two-and-a-half years by three women whose purchase of stall seats has cost them over £750.—*The Times.*

The next item is a play called "Love Child." This is for all except Welsh listeners, who have a Welsh feature.—B.B.C. announcer, 21st September.

During the war she was employed by the American Intelligence Service on propaganda work. She was now most penitent.—Report of trial in *News of the World.*

At the September meeting of the Mapledurham W.I. . . . a description of her visit to the Louvre, finishing with a talk on vegetables, was given by Mrs. King (South Stoke).—*Reading Mercury.*

A soldier of the Army Catering Corps, was . . . said by the prosecution to have put himself at the head of a procession shouting anti-Jewish slogans, and was seen giving something like a Fascist salute. —— said that he had been celebrating the fact that his baby had come out of hospital.—*Manchester Guardian.*

PLANNED TRADE

Recent indications, confirmed by Mr. Bevin's and Sir Stafford Cripps's speeches, make it pretty plain that the Government has not yet finally decided what foreign trade policy will best meet the needs of Great Britain in the radically changed condition of world affairs. Some of our Ministers' advisers, in face of all the facts, apparently still believe that a country as dependent as we are on external trade must stick to full multilateralism as an objective at all costs, and must back up the Americans in their efforts to ostracise every form of discrimination or bilateral arrangement. How such a policy is to help us through our present difficulties—much less, how we could hope to sustain it in face of an American slump—these heroes of orthodoxy never explain. They are content to reiterate the truism that, the wider the markets open to us, the more exports we shall have the chance to sell, if our prices are right. They ignore the fact that the American market—to say nothing of a number of others, especially in the dollar area—is not wide open, but barricaded by a high tariff which particularly hits our exports. They are equally blind to the consideration that, whereas we must have foodstuffs and materials from abroad in order to live at all, many suppliers of these goods can get along without our manufactures; they can meet these needs elsewhere if they possess or can borrow the requisite foreign exchange.

As against these strict multilateralists, there are others, apparently including Mr. Bevin, who, no less irrationally, put their faith in Imperial economic union and speak of Empire preference as if it were the Ark of the Covenant. Yet nothing is more plainly demonstrable than that the British Empire, however defined, is an impossible economic unit if the notion is that it should approach to being self-contained. It is fantastic to suppose that Great Britain's full need for export markets can be met inside the Empire; and it is still wilder fantasy to suggest that the Empire countries as a group can either abandon the protection of their own industries or market all their primary products under the Commonwealth flag. The Dominions and Colonies need, and will continue to need, many extensive markets outside the Empire; and the whole world would be the loser, and their own economies utterly disrupted, were such markets to fail. Dominion statesmen know this perfectly well; and so do Indians and Burmese and Malayans.

There is a great deal more to be said in favour of the third school of thought, which is attracted by the idea of creating in Europe an area of internal free trade wide enough to be comparable in production and consuming capacity with the United States and with the Soviet Union. The adherents of this point of view speak sometimes in terms of all Europe, even including the Soviet Union; sometimes of all Europe except the Soviet Union; and sometimes of a not very exactly defined "Western Europe," which includes at any rate Western Germany. What is urged is that, if a complete Customs union and complete freedom of exchange could be established over a tolerably wide area in Europe, Great Britain could well afford to join such a group and could find within it the markets for enough exports to offset the deficiency in her present balance of trade. Such a group, it is further urged, could lower its costs of production enough to enable it to stand up on equal terms to the United States and the Soviet Union, could maintain an economy independent of dollar aid, and could form the basis for a valuable "balancing" political alliance.

With this view we have much sympathy provided that it is stated with proper regard to practical possibilities. In the first place, it is clearly futile to talk of any European union which is to include all Europe except the Soviet Union, and on this basis to suppose that the countries of Eastern Europe would act as suppliers *within the group* of foodstuffs in exchange for the manufactures of the West. In every Eastern European capital such a conception would be denounced at once as a "colonial policy" devised for the exploitation of backward Eastern peasant-type economies. Either the group must include the Soviet Union, or it must exclude the countries which fall definitely within the Soviet sphere of influence. Inclusion of the Soviet Union would be admirable if it were possible; but for the present at any rate it clearly is not. Any European union of the kind desired would imply either the abandonment of planning—as Mr. Churchill would advocate—over its entire area, or a degree of common planning on which it is impossible to imagine a "totalitarian" U.S.S.R. and a "democratic" Britain agreeing. Accordingly, the only form of economic European union that can have any relevance to our present problem is a union based on Western Europe and therefore not including the predominantly agricultural areas of the East.

At this point comes in the proposal to combine European with Empire economic union by bringing into the "club" both the dependencies of Continental States and the independent British Dominions. This, it is urged, would redress the balance between primary and non-primary production; this would provide an area, not indeed fully self-contained, but well able to stand on its own feet and to follow a common policy of full employment and high production without being really seriously upset by economic fluctuations in the rest of the world—even in the United States.

Once again, with the objects such advocates have in view we fully agree. But we are entitled to insist that they must not minimise the difficulties in the way. Is it really to be expected that the countries of Western Europe will agree to approach a fully integrated international economy except by stages? Is it realised that, as between countries which are all working to a greater or lesser extent on the basis of separate national plans, no economic union can work unless their separate plans are dovetailed into a common plan—or alternatively, unless all the countries concerned give up planning and resort to internal *laissez-faire*? Is it realised that the existing differences in productivity, in standards of living, in taxation policy, in social services and in a hundred other things present problems which will have to be solved before any unity resembling that of the United States or of the Soviet Union can be achieved? To ignore these factors, or to pretend that economic union can be achieved without a substantial surrender of national sovereignty by its members, is unrealistic.

The plain truth is that this solution is no solution at all of Great Britain's *present* difficulties. We in this country have to find the means of living with the least possible hardship, next year, the year after that, and the year after that. And even if, within a year or two, we can *begin* building a wider union of the type suggested, we cannot for a considerable time hope to enjoy substantial benefits from it. That is no reason against working for a lower tariff system in Western Europe or against beginning at once to work out concerted plans of production and exchange designed to lower costs of specialised manufacture for an assured wider market; but it does mean that we must *also* take such other measures as we can to cope with the difficulties of today and tomorrow.

What we need, in relation to Empire countries, and to any others which are ready to treat with us, is to enter into reciprocal arrangements under which we buy in bulk the imports we require and they are able to send, and they agree to take payment, not necessarily in British goods, but either in British goods or in currencies which we are in a position to supply. We need this because we require the goods. The Dominions and the other countries likely to enter into such arrangements need our markets and guarantees of relatively stable prices for their primary products. On these lines, we can hope for results long before there can be any chance of getting a European economic union into effective operation.

That, it may be answered, is all very well, but the suggested course is not open to us because of the terms on which we accepted the American loan and of the International Trade Charter which, in accepting the loan, we committed ourselves to support. Well, by the same token we committed ourselves to sterling convertibility—and that has been swept away already by the inexorable force of events. Is it argued that we are bound to conditions which are equally unworkable, and which threaten to condemn us to starve? Fortunately, the International Trade Charter is not in force, and we can reasonably argue that the refusal of the Soviet Union to take part in it relieves us from any obligation to commit suicide for its sake. There remain only the vague and general pledges against discrimination given by the Coalition Government during the war; and, in relation to these, we can fairly argue that circumstances alter cases, and that we are under no moral obligation to crucify ourselves between two Great Powers on the cross of Article VII. We must openly resume our freedom of action, especially our freedom to buy what we can where we can, even on terms which the Americans may regard as discriminative in terms of their capitalist code of commerce.

But, if it is indispensable to take such immediate measures as we can to replace dollar supplies with supplies from other sources, it is no less necessary to work for a long-run solution of the kind already outlined. A complete economic union including Western Europe, its colonial territories and the British Dominions, may be unattainable; but the retention of some barriers between units of this far-flung group of countries is by no means incompatible with a high degree of economic unification. It need not prevent, for example, agreements for international rationalisation of the production of the various kinds of steel, or of motor cars, or of a great many other manufactured products, or of agricultural production, or of the tourist trade. There could be, in addition, a West European purchasing board or boards to make bulk purchase agreements covering the whole area. There could be measures of common planning for the mutual exchange of products, designed to facilitate mass-production and specialisation by assuring wider markets. There could be common currency arrangements, including perhaps the reinstitution on a wider basis of the wartime dollar pool. It is a mistake to concentrate the main attention on a Customs union—that is to say, on the tariff aspect. This is no doubt important; but it is only one factor in a situation which offers many possibilities of constructive international co-operation. The chances of advancing towards it depend on these other possibilities being seized first.

CAN AUSTRIA EXIST?

(From a Special Correspondent)

Vienna, September.

The old question whether Austria is *lebensfähig* is to-day more acute than ever. The Great Powers at Moscow guaranteed its freedom and independence, and it has neither. On the Quadrupartite Commission, whose abortive debates have now ended in deadlock, they have each been accusing the others of infringing Austrian sovereignty. The Americans accuse the Russians of interference in regard to the USIVA works (the 200 former German firms in Eastern Austria, under the control of the Administration of Soviet Property). The Russians retaliate by saying that the terms of the Congress relief appropriation represent interference. There is substance in both charges, yet both policies are justified by the economic chaos of the country. For instance, in the Soviet-controlled works wage policy runs contrary to that of the Austrian government: workers get extra food, women get equal pay. But what other way is there of ensuring full production, with money nearly valueless and food and labour short? Austria is in a vicious circle. So long as its economy is chaotic, the Great Powers will have to intervene; so long as they intervene, the measures necessary for recovery will not be taken. But even if these measures were taken, could the Austrian economy ever stand on its feet? Can Austria in fact ever become independent?

As things now are, Austria cannot exist at all without relief supplies which are enormous in relation to the size of the country (its total population is 7½ million) and appear likely to be needed indefinitely. In 1946, relief supplies from Unrra, with American and British military relief, totalled $150 million; commercial imports, mainly barter, amounted to $22 million, and exports to only $31 million, so that the deficit on the total balance of payments was only slightly less than the total received as relief. As a temporary phase, this was inevitable, but in the first half of this year the deficit has continued on the same scale, and in the coming twelve months it is likely to be even larger, because although exports are increasing, food imports are costing more; and also overdue supplies of industrial raw materials and agricultural equipment are expected. The deficit will be covered by the recent Congress relief appropriation (from which supplies are now arriving at the rate of $10 million a month), a loan from the Export-Import Bank, and the British £10 million loan. The outstanding fact is that Austria is continuing to cost as much to maintain as it did in 1945: it exists only as a pauper State, on perpetual relief.

Food imports are, of course, the key to the situation, since at present food accounts for 70 per cent. of relief supplies. Even with this large expenditure, amounting to some $100 million on food alone (for a non-agricultural population of 5½ million), the official ration is only 1,500 calories a day. Food has now become a universal obsession and the struggle to buy black market supplies takes up the time and energy of all classes. All who can—all except the old and ill and very poor—go to the country to buy. Otherwise the effects of underfeeding would be more apparent. As it is, they are bad enough: the infant death rate, though it has fallen from the terrible level of 1945, is still five times the pre-war rate.

Much of the food shortage is due to bad organisation. Before 1938 Austria produced 70-80 per cent. of its food, and the town population consumed at twice the present level. But Nazi policy built up Austrian industry and and let its agriculture go down; by 1945 bread grain production had fallen by 50 per cent., and the acreage by 30 per cent. With a proper production policy, it should have been possible by now to raise the arable area nearer the pre-war level. There is, of course, a shortage of equipment and livestock, but not on the scale which exists in other occupied countries; there are even more tractors than in 1939, and cattle have fallen off only by 20 per cent. Yet the official figures show that the 1947 bread grain acreage is only slightly higher than in 1945, a clear reflection of the lack of a proper price policy. At the same time, the machinery for the collection of agricultural produce is corrupt and inefficient. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, controlled by the People's Party, while the Ministry of Food is Socialist; thus no single authority is responsible for bringing in the supplies. This division of responsibility is unfortunately paralleled in other economic spheres, giving the People's Party control of the key processes, and the Socialists the subsidiary branches—a capital-labour division within the Government which precludes any real policy of Socialist reconstruction.

But the most serious factor preventing rationalisation of food supplies is the currency chaos, a peculiar mixture of inflation and deflation which combines the disadvantages of both. The volume of currency in circulation is still far too high in relation to wages and controlled prices. At the time of the currency conversion in 1945 the blocking measures taken were insufficient to reduce the amount of currency in circulation (then about four times the pre-war amount), and since then the note issue has continued to increase (about half of the increase being due to occupation costs). Until July this year wages and prices of controlled commodities were fixed at about the pre-war level. The result is that the production of food and essential commodities stagnates, while the excess of purchasing power stimulates the production of luxuries and black market trade. Recently there have been large increases of wages and prices, but these alone, without more drastic blocking and confiscation measures, will not be sufficient to stabilise the currency. Now that the question of occupation costs has been settled, there can be no real reason —except political pressure from the big balances— for postponing stabilisation. Until there is a genuine stabilisation, there will be no increase in food deliveries.

Even with better production and collection, however, Austria will still need to import food to recover its pre-war consumption level. Before the war it took some 350,000 tons of bread grain and 400,000 tons of fodder per annum from the Danubian countries. The real hope of restoring the economy lies in the resumption of trade relations with the East. The needs of Austria and the Danubian countries are now more complementary than ever. In the policy of planned industrialisation on which the East European countries have now embarked, steel and machinery are the main bottlenecks, and it is precisely these things that Austrian industry is able to produce. During the war, enormous new industrial plant was installed by the Nazis, particularly in pig iron, aluminium, synthetic nitrates and oil (the last is under Soviet control). In iron and steel much of the new capacity may ultimately prove to be uneconomic, but with the present world steel shortage this question does not yet arise. In recent months there has been a marked recovery in iron and steel, mainly due to the British loan which is being spent on the purchase of Ruhr coal. Coal imports have been used to produce coke in the new coke oven batteries at Linz, and three blast furnaces are now in operation.

The works at Linz and Donawitz are already producing for export, and strangely enough, by three-cornered East and West trade. Under one agreement, Poland is supplying Austria with some 60,000 tons of coal dust and slack, while Austria in return is delivering to Sweden pig iron and rolled steel. Under another, Austria is buying coke from Czechoslovakia in dollars obtained from Italy in return for the export of pig iron and ship plates. Thus the partial recovery of the iron and steel industry has opened the way for its further expansion, and by 1948 it should be possible for crude steel and rolled steel to reach the pre-war level. But as yet there is virtually no trade with Austria's former suppliers in the Danube basin.

The hope of restoring Austria's economic independence depends largely on whether steel exports can be used to buy food from Eastern Europe. At present the size of this year's Danubian grain surplus is not known, but it is likely that Hungary, Rumania and Jugoslavia will export some grain this year. Czechoslovakia has had an unexpectedly bad harvest, and needs grain imports of several hundred thousand tons: the 200,000 tons to be supplied by Russia, under the trade agreement now being negotiated, will probably not be sufficient, and as the industrial arsenal of the Eastern bloc Czechoslovakia will no doubt have first claim on Danubian supplies. Thus it is probable that Austria cannot import large supplies as yet. But unless a beginning is made in this direction it is difficult to see how the economy can begin to pay its way. Clearly neither Geneva multilateralism nor Eastern bilateralism alone can help Austria. It needs a mixture of both. If the present division between East and West solidifies, all Central Europe will suffer, but Austria most of all, since it can exist, if at all, only as a connecting link. Unless it can trade with the East, the independence so lightly guaranteed by the Great Powers will remain a mockery.

THE PREGNANT ATOM

FLIGHTS-OF-FANCY writers have teased us with the prospect of machines turning against their creators, with Frankenstein's monster running amok and the Robots in revolt. Now that matter-of-fact physicist, Prof. J. D. Cockcroft, has been telling the matter-of-fact experts of the World Power Conference about an atomic "breeder-pile," suggestive of nubile neutrons and procreating protons. But it is more than suggestive; a breeder-pile is in fact an atomic-engine designed to give birth to generations of atomic-engines by parthenogenetic reproduction. Perhaps we can reassure ourselves that (as far as we can see) it will always involve a human accoucheur. Indeed, the only people who have been seriously perturbed, so far, by this disclosure from the Director of Britain's Atomic Research Station are the American Security authorities, who thought that they could keep the fecund "breeder" like Danaë in a brazen tower.

The principle of the breeder-pile has been obvious to scientists from the moment that the Chicago pile first produced plutonium in December, 1942. A pile is an atomic conversion plant in which billets of uranium metal are dispersed in a mass of graphite (familiar as the lead in pencils). Natural uranium exists as twins—Uranium 235 and Uranium 238. U.235 is the atom which, in splitting, releases not only energy but enough projectiles (*i.e.*, neutrons) to split other similar atoms and so set up a self-sustaining chain-reaction. This, in its ultimate expression, is the bomb-explosion which destroyed Hiroshima. But a uranium bomb has to consist of pure U.235, divorced from U.238, with which it is associated in primary uranium in proportions of one part in 140. The atom of U.238 does not chain-react; but, if it absorbs a neutron, it is transmuted into an element which does not exist in nature, namely, neptunium. That, in turn, "degenerates" spontaneously into a second man-made element, plutonium, which (like U.235) is a chain-reactor and was the charge in the Nagasaki bomb. "Man-made" means the pile, the trick of which is to arrange that the spare neutrons from the U.235 are conveniently absorbed by the U.238. The pile, therefore, is a device for converting natural uranium into "unnatural" plutonium. It is a process of minute and controlled explosions generating intense heat, which is the form which atomic energy will take for industrial use (i.e., it is a furnace which will super-heat steam or gases to drive electric generators).

Even Security cannot hide what is thus obvious —that U.235, in its self-destroying act of procreation, "fertilises" U.235 and breeds plutonium, which "fertilises" more U.235 to breed more plutonium. If it is a bomb which is wanted, the plutonium thus generated is extracted and turned to military use. Or it can be extracted and used to enrich other piles for industrial use. Either way, it has to be removed periodically before the concentration in the pile assumes dangerous proportions. So breeding, in the sense of using one atomic-pile to beget other atomic-piles, has been inherent in the process from the start. What Cockcroft did at the Hague Conference was to describe intensive atomic "stud-farming" by a new advanced method, about which the authorities have been "cagey." Describing how the atomic-pile, or nuclear reactor, would eventually be adapted to industrial use (and he foresaw power-production plants within three to five years), he estimated that, when materials could be improved to stand the potential temperatures, uranium-into-plutonium piles would have a thermo-dynamic efficiency of 25 to 30 per cent. On this basis, 1,000 tons of uranium (the total pre-war world production) would provide all the electric units at present generated in the United Kingdom by coal and hydro-electricity.

Next, Cockcroft went on to show how, by the breeder-principle, *total world energy requirements* could be met by only 170 tons of atomic fuel. Piles would be built using plutonium or U.235. Because they would be "burning" pure chain-reacting materials they would be comparatively small, and would form the core of a bigger pile, consisting of an envelope packed with uranium or thorium. Why thorium? Because this element (familiar as the coating of gas mantles; hence their present shortage) is another fissionable material which, when "triggered-off" by U.235, the dynamic element, is converted into yet another man-made element, U.233, which behaves, in turn, like U.235 or plutonium, as a chain-reactor. The uranium, or thorium, envelope would absorb all the neutrons from the core. Thus, more than one secondary fuel-atom would be produced, in the envelope, for every fuel-atom burnt in the core. In this process all the enclosing material would eventually be converted—the U.238 into plutonium or the thorium into U.235. All the time the pile would be producing power-energy and yet would finish up with much more atomic fuel than it started with—fuel which could be used to stoke other piles and repeat the process. Thus, the present heat-energy—4,300,000,000,000 kilowatt-hours—which the world now produces from all sources—coal, oil and hydro-electricity—to drive its industry, light and heat its homes and propel its transport, could be provided from one trainload of atomic fuel.

What would not Mr. Shinwell give to be the godfather to a breeder-pile? Unfortunately for our comfort this winter, atomic-parthenogenesis, on this scale, does not figure in the Marshall Plan; and, even if the governments allowed the scientists to stop fiddling with the bomb, and give their undivided attention to making practical what is practicable, it is still many years off. But the atom is pregnant with possibilities.

Ritchie Calder

SMUGGLING

I've been trying to find out why people smuggle—ordinary people who hold themselves aloof from simple larceny. This would be interesting at any time; but just now, when the nation's economy is understood to be tottering to a crash that may engulf us all, and so many people who could get abroad during the summer have been helping to push it over, it is quite fascinating.

First, the Customs preventive officer is the Inland Revenue Department, and the Inland Revenue Department is the Government, and everyone cheats the Government if he can. Under this category there are sub-divisions. Some people cheat the Government because they are convinced it will always cheat them if it can, some because it's a Socialist Government and the sooner it collapses the better, some because they have a genuine, Tolstoyan conviction that all coercive government is immoral, and some (these are the majority, a vast force of blinkered individualists) because the Government is too big an animal to feel the pain, like an elephant attacked with drawing-pins. These, too, are the people, the individualists to whom honesty is the small change of commerce among gentlemen, who match their wits against ticket collectors at railway barriers and hold up more important proceedings in the magistrates' courts while they explain why their cases are different.

Secondly, the Customs officers are boors and outwitting them is a point of honour. This is contested hotly by many people, who find them charming, and warmly by others who say they are at least friendly. One of my informants quoted cases in which quite innocent people, genuinely unsmuggling, have truthfully announced that they had nothing to declare and then had their open suitcases turned sceptically upside-down on the counter and missed the boat train. Inferentially, if you smuggle, this doesn't happen, because you always declare *something* and impose no strain on the officers' credulity.

Thirdly, import tariffs are all wrong; smuggling is merely one of many evils that couldn't exist under Free Trade. The fervid free-trader, clear-eyed and conscience-free, hoodwinks the Customs as a political act of faith.

Fourthly, the whole policy of trying to build up our pre-war trade position is a mistake. In Belgium and Luxembourg you can get whatever you want in the shops because those countries are content with their humble position and are not striving with tightened belts to achieve the impossible. We should bow to the inevitable and make chocolate cream horns for our people.

All these, I think, are rationalisations. People smuggle because they want the things they smuggle and because the chances of getting caught are so much less than if the property is acquired by larceny, false pretences, embezzlement, or fraudulent bankruptcy. Cynical as it may sound, the public conscience is more deeply stirred by crimes that are fairly easy of detection than by those that almost anyone could safely commit: impudent defiance of a law that nearly everyone obeys is, we find, the unforgivable, and an example must be made. In the absence of this universal disapproval and in view of its usurpation by mass naughtiness, the penalties for smuggling are tremendous. The fine is worked out by taking the current market price of the goods in England, *plus* the Customs duty on them, *plus* the purchase tax, and then multiply-by three. This often amounts to many thousands of pounds; but if it comes to less than a hundred, the Customs people can claim that the fine be made up to that figure. And in addition (not instead) the offender can be sent to prison for two years—even by a magistrate. The smuggled goods are forfeited to the Crown, and at the moment the Customs warehouses are bulging with them.

Severe penalties, of course, have never yet stopped the crimes at which they were directed; indeed, you could almost conclude, from the history of penology, that they have had the opposite effect and that you have discovered one of the most inexplicable paradoxes in human behaviour. You would not be allowing for the reactionary conduct of judges, juries, and magistrates, with whom, under our legal system, the last word about punishment has hitherto rested; or for the new factor that in some cases, of which smuggling is one, an executive body like the Customs is empowered by statute to remit or reduce the penalty after the court case is over—which causes the utmost indignation among magistrates. And you would not be any nearer an understanding of the high incidence of smuggling among the righteous, because tremendous fines (which are not being remitted) are now reported in the press every day and yet nearly everyone smuggles.

Essentially, the "respectable" smuggler relishes his own artfulness and derring-do, and the high percentage of successes fosters the illusion that he possesses these qualities in a measure he never before suspected. It is chastening to talk to a Customs preventive officer privately about it. Over two-thirds of the respectable smugglers, it appears, are women; and some of their subterfuges are so transparent and ingenuous that most Customs officers observe them with a weary smile—the false-bottomed bag, the nylons in the toes of shoes and the tops of stockings and the shoulder pads of coats, the palpably new labels stitched into furs, the leather corners on suitcases showing the false stitching, the Swiss watches in belts with many pockets, the coat collars rubbed with soap to make them look worn, the unbroken procession of smart new shoes coming down the gangways. The officers must find it difficult not to laugh aloud when they see a lady wearing two pairs of nylons with the seams not coinciding down the guilty calf, or hear for the thousandth time the explanation "someone asked me to bring this suitcase home for him—I'd no idea what was in it."

Organised, large-scale smuggling has reached unprecedented heights and inspired feats of ingenuity that make individual Customs-dodgers seem more pathetic than ever. Drums of newsprint are especially suspect, because they are sometimes hollow cylinders with a newsprint surface and contain millions of saccharin tablets. Sausage-skins containing watches packed like coins, gold and platinum done up as slabs of chocolate, tins labelled dried egg, jam, powdered milk or cocoa and stuffed with nylons, electric light globe cartons packed with reels of camera-film—attempts like these have all been discovered and frustrated, but no one knows how many have succeeded. The shortage of Customs preventive officers and the virtual non-existence of coastguards make it extremely difficult to cope with the people who land cargoes of cigarettes, Dutch bulbs, watches and cameras, wines and spirits from privately owned boats in the lonely estuaries along the coasts of Essex, Kent, Sussex, Hants, and Dorset—and even Glamorganshire. Millions of bulbs have come from Holland in exchange for cycle tyres (of which the Dutch use more, in proportion to population, than anyone in the world) and cigarettes, in the course of a really widespread smuggling racket. The Dutch Government tried to stop this in 1946 by selling twenty million English cigarettes ration-free to the Dutch people at 8s. 4d. for twenty; the profit, which at that time was 6s. on each packet, was given to Dutch war charities. But the black market men cut their prices to 7s. for twenty, and the trade went on. The desolate coast between Rye and Dungeness is once again spoken of as the "smugglers' paradise." Small French vessels waiting outside the three-mile limit transfer their contraband cargoes to local boats that put out after dark, working with hooded hurricane lamps. All this betokens big money and organisation, and it goes on because, as a rule, the people caught and fined are only the smaller fry who, coming into the tail end of the operation as distributors, run the greatest risk for the smallest gain.

When these are caught it is, as often as not, because they fall victim to the powers of the police to "stop, search, and detain" anyone they suspect to be conveying property which has been stolen "or otherwise unlawfully obtained"; a suitcase full of cigarettes is an affront to the most credulous policeman. Sometimes an unusual display of Swiss watches in a shop-window will lead to meddlesome inquiries by police or Customs officers; and the prosecution that ensues concerns itself with evasion of purchase tax as well as the possession of smuggled goods. But the real organisers have got their money and are already at work on their next transaction.

No great difficulty confronts the preventive officers at the passenger disembarkation ports. Private smuggling could be almost stamped out there if they searched every bag and (as they have the power to do) every passenger, believing no one, obliging no one and adding hours to the length of a journey. They haven't the staff to clear a boat-load of passengers in half an hour, but they could do it in, say, twelve hours; and in these days, with executive power so firmly and unchallengeably in the saddle, they could start doing it tomorrow without further mandate or public means of redress. The trouble about the smuggling laws, however, is not merely that they are out of sympathy with majority opinion, like Income Tax and the Street Betting Act and Sunday Observance; most citizens, indeed, think they are good for other citizens. Their weakness lies in the failure of contemporary citizens to achieve an integration, a common identity—if you like, an enlightened patriotism. Identity lies instead in wrong-doing because it is not seen to be wrong; and while the reports of smuggling and currency cases can draw as copiously on Burke's Peerage as on the Telephone Directory for their *dramatis personnæ*, the hounding of smugglers is like dog eating dog. But there, it is priggish and lonely to pontificate about this. I set out to discover why good citizens smuggle at a time when it amounts almost to high treason. My only qualification for the job was that, personally, I haven't been abroad for ten years.

C. H. Rolph

The Arts and Entertainment

THE VIENNA OPERA

So many odd things have been seen and heard this past year in the opera houses of London that there is a natural tendency to consider our charming Viennese visitors as perfection itself. In point of fact, like most opera companies, they vary widely in talent and skill; where they score (over the Italians no less than ourselves) is in their innate musicality and sense of style. They really understand, and make the audience feel, that different composers inhabit different worlds of sensation and emotion: their *Cosi fan tutte* has the Mozartian balance of elegance, tenderness and irony; their *Fidelio* the passionate humanity of Beethoven; their *Salome* the nervous sensuality of Strauss. This unfailing sense of what is in keeping shows as clearly in the dramatic as in the musical side of their work. I notice some comments on the "static" nature of their productions and the stillness maintained during arias and contemplative ensembles, as though this were an eccentricity which needed explaining away. Good heavens, it is we, and not they, who are the eccentrics, often cheerfully entrusting our opera productions to ballet-minded amateurs, whose inexperience leads them to search the score for twiddly bits which can be ingeniously "translated" into stage gesture and movement, and to avoid repose like the very devil. The Viennese, lively as crickets whenever liveliness is wanted, know also how to produce that absolute hush on both sides of the footlights in which alone the purely lyrical moments can make their full effect.

The treatment of Mozart's dry recitatives is also designed to avoid meaningless clatter and bustle; Josef Krips accompanies it with many pleasant flashes of wit, and achieves remarkably smooth transitions into and out of the musical numbers. The general impression of rapidity and ease is furthered by the use of permanent sets for *Don Giovanni* and *Cosi fan tutte*, though neither of these operas is really suited to such treatment. For *Don Giovanni* Robert Kautsky designed a nobly proportioned façade something in the style of the Palladian theatre at Vicenza, which did well for everything except the rustic gambols of Masetto and Zerlina; on the other hand his severely black-and-white construction for *Cosi fan tutte* not only tired the eye, but was wildly off the mark for the most voluptuously pretty of operas. Nevertheless this was much the more successful of the company's first two Mozartian productions; in fact, it was in its small way one of the most delicious realisations of an artificial masterpiece that could be imagined. The balance on the stage, and between stage and orchestra, was that of fine chamber-music; the ensembles (and it is largely an opera of ensembles) sounded wonderfully harmonious. Erich Kunz and Paul Schöffler gave memorable performances as Guglielmo and Don Alfonso respectively, and soft singing of exquisite sweetness came from Irmgard Seefried as Fiordiligi. True, she doesn't as yet carry the guns for such things as the big aria in the first act, but her small salvos were so accurately delivered that the audience capitulated at once. An artist!

The ensemble in *Don Giovanni* was less remarkable, and in any event this is an opera in which ensemble is not enough, its curiously mixed style demanding periodic outbursts in the grand manner. These were not forthcoming; the performance had many attractive features, notably the playing of the orchestra, but it hardly revealed the stature and variety of the work. The three ladies, each of them an unusually desirable addition to Leporello's catalogue, were by no means well matched in vocal talent. Maria Cebotari was quite unequal to the part of Donna Anna, and a little imp of shrillness is apt to get into the otherwise highly accomplished and musical singing of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (her Marcelline in *Fidelio* was better in this respect than her Donna Elvira), so that the only really pure soprano tones came from Hilde Gueden's Zerlina. The Don Ottavio (Anton Dermota) had pretty moments but often lost both pitch and quality, and Paul Schöffler's voice lacks the seductive inflections demanded by Don Giovanni's music; our old Wagnerian friend Ludwig Weber was magnificently resonant both as the Commendatore and as Rocco in *Fidelio*.

The sublime, faulty opera in which Beethoven embodied his personal and political aspirations received a performance which was also sublime in spite of its faults. Some of these were the hazards of a first-night performance troubled by a last-minute change in the cast; but Hilde Konetzni's clumsy singing of her big scene cannot be so simply accounted for. And yet there was an intensity and passion about this Leonora which made it possible, for long stretches, to ignore her vocal failings; and Julius Patzak, who is remembered as an elegant Mozart tenor at Munich in the twenties, delivered the recitative and aria which begins the second act in a style which convinced us (notwithstanding his subsequent slip in the *allegro*) that he is a great Florestan. The Prisoners' Chorus was more moving than ever now that it has become so painfully topical: there can be few European countries in which it does not suggest grim memories and apprehensions. Under Clemens Krauss, the Vienna Philharmonic played the wonderful score like men who have known every note of it since childhood.

Salome, in spite of its orchestral glitter, its mastery of the stage and its occasional flashes of true musical invention, is apt to make a total effect which is either absurd or repulsive, according to the quality of the performance. The present revival is anything but absurd: consummately played, sung and acted, it recalls the performances of *Electra* under Beecham a few years before the war. Clemens Krauss is always at his best in the Strauss scores, and the richness and delicacy of the orchestral playing were memorable. The whole cast was fine, but Mme. Ljuba Welitsch's Salome was something quite unusual in the clarity, variety of colour and beautiful diction of her singing, the subtlety of her phrasing and the nervous intensity of her movements and gestures. So far as can be judged from a broadcast, her Donna Anna is also admirable, and I hope we may have the opportunity of hearing her in many other roles, both with and without the remainder of the company. She is a star, and I am old-fashioned enough to believe that opera needs stars as well as good ensemble.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR.

THE MOVIES

"Les Portes de la Nuit," at the Rialto
"Sortileges," at the Curzon
"Deception," at Warner's

Last week reminded us, as painfully as could be, that we should never see *Le Jour se Lève* again; this week, we are rewarded with a new film by M. Marcel Carné—the long-attended *Les Portes de la Nuit.* It was made in 1946, a couple of years after *Les Enfants du Paradis*, and once more the inspiration is Paris, its streets and intermingled lives. Time of wry rejoicing, of hardship, of delayed tragedies: a night in the year after liberation. The Métro pours out its released humanity; a resister coming back collides with the friend whose death he has just announced; there are arguments on stairs about collaboration, the barricades; children have learnt a new secret life of conclaves and pilfering; the rich and the poor rub shoulders in black-market cafés; a boy smiles at a girl through a railing; the big shiny car darting through wretched neighbourhoods fails to insulate its owners from unhappiness; new relationships are springing up, old scores have to be paid off; night thins away the crowd and switches off the bedroom lights, leaving the homeless, the uprooted, the doomed, and the heedlessly in love to haunt the streets. We speak of city life as though in some way it obscured essential things, forgetting or never having known its nightly aspect.

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Sois sâge, O ma douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille;
Tu réclamais le soir; il descend; le voici . . . .

That poetry of grandeur and squalor, of the terror that attends human destiny, is the theme of *Les Portes de la Nuit*, and it is elaborated in images of remarkable beauty. The black riches of photography attain their full force in the last third of the film, where the intermingled dramas are gathered together and quite transfigured by the magnificence of the scene. If *Les Portes de la Nuit* had been able to prepare adequately for that climax, it would have been one of the most impressive films ever made.

But for several reasons it has limped badly. The difficulties, on the screen, of cramming into less than two hours an elaboration of plot and characters that would cost the novelist 400 pages are probably insuperable. One felt the same of *Les Enfants du Paradis*. Jacques Prévert, the writer of both, again shows a mixture of weakness and brilliance. At times he is histrionic; at times he bores. And some of his poetic symbols belong rather to the stage or the printed poem. That is the case here with his figure of Destiny, a tramp with implacable gaze, who wanders in and out warning others of what is in store for them. One can't, in an action that otherwise observes the strictest realism, quite accept him. Destiny, in fact, is far more powerfully figured in the accidental meetings in cafés, the shriek of oncoming trains, the pale pools of light along midnight streets. Does the film, then, fail? Perhaps. But failure at such a level can make the success even of as good a piece as *Odd Man Out*, with its not dissimilar aims, seem inferior. Agostini's photography and Trauner's sets have been well matched by the music of Joseph Kosma, and the acting of a large cast headed by Pierre Brasseur, Yves Montand, Nathalie Nattier, Serge Reggiani, and Saturnin Fabre is admirable throughout.

Sortilèges is probably the best of M. Christian Jacque's films: others shown here have included *Boule de Suif* and *La Symphonie Fantastique*. It deviates from his usual Hollywood style to plunge into melodrama on its own. The bellringer of a remote mountain village practises sorcery and can sling a wicked stone. Woe to any traveller who passes that way! The bellman will have him! There, plunging through the snow, goes a riderless black horse! At moments this horse may come to haunt us like an old ballad refrain, but meanwhile a more turgid drama of spells and loves is being worked out. The devilishness of the bellman's hut so affects the camera that it can't keep upright, leaning this way and that. Oh wizardry! In the end there's a grand fire, half a hanging, a final stone from the sling, a cursory approach to the precipice, and then the happy lovers walk away hand in hand over the snows. The Massif Central has had the best part in a violent, tedious, but not unstriking piece. Lucien Coedel as the bellman and Fernand Ledoux as the battiest of bee-keepers bring earthiness to the ensorcelled heights.

Deception, the latest peep into the world of music, has the advantage of not being about people called Brahms, Schumann or Tchaikovsky. In fact it is very much wrapped around Miss Bette Davis and Mr. Claude Rains, both at the top of their form. How the one pitches her sentences, while the other gruffs and struts, how, indeed, they both act!

William Whitebait

RADIO NOTES

A year ago, on September 28th, the Third Programme was first broadcast. The anniversary is to be marked by a concert of English music; suitably, for music is the art in which this programme has reached the highest level of achievement. And English music of the present and future owes the Third Programme a particular debt; its series of works by contemporary British composers has given an audience to composers whose work—whose very names—would not often be heard by many of us. Here are six: Rubbra, Copland, Hadley, Finzi, Murrill and Arnell. Few who live outside London got much chance to hear these before the Third Programme began. Nor is this series all: last week, for example, Michael Tippett's oratorio, "A Child of Our Time," was broadcast by the Third Programme from Arnhem; Edmund Rubbra talked on composers' problems; sonatas by both these composers were reproduced; and Benjamin Britten played his arrangements of old songs. From what the "Third" gives us, and from what I have heard of British audiences from Naples to Edinburgh during the past four or five years, I get the feeling that we are becoming a musical nation again. Those who direct the Third Programme can be proud of their part in making this a possibility.

To be reminded of Max twice in one week is a great pleasure; an appreciation by Harold Nicolson of *Zuleika Dobson* was on a level with its subject and therefore as near perfection as mortals get. And I enjoyed a brilliant adaptation of *Savonarola Brown*.

But here, as so often on the Third Programme, too many of the voices were alike. The Third Programme is hampered more than either of the others by the inflexibility of the "educated" English accent.

After hearing Cliff Gordon being wretchedly unhappy with a piano, in an "interlude of humour," the complaint that there is no humour in the Third Programme has to be dropped; but we can still do with more.

Tom Wintringham

Correspondence

FARMING IMPRESSIONS

Sir,—A few weeks ago you raised in your editorial columns the only criticism which I have so far seen of the Government's agricultural policy. You queried whether increased subsidies would be likely to increase the efficiency of the farmer. The answer I feel is quite obviously, "No." I have waited in vain for further evidence in the press that the inadequacy of the Government's proposals has been realised. The lack of criticism is deeply disturbing. It suggests that even at this late stage the people of this country do not yet realise the importance of agriculture in the economy of the nation, or alternatively, that they have no knowledge of the issues involved.

If they had, they would not applaud increased subsidies to the farmer without first inquiring why they are necessary; for is it not a reflection on the efficiency of any industry that it needs direct financial inducement to carry on? That subsidies effected a general increase of production during the war will not be denied, but few people realise at what cost to the fertility of the land this increased production was so often obtained. Justification of the policy can be found as a temporary expedient, but not as a long-term policy. Forced production for a quick profit has turned millions of acres of American land into a desert. It is not too much to say that, on the long view, a similar danger faces this country. Under the wartime conditions, now unhappily perpetuated, it arises in two main ways.

It arises firstly from a system under which it is a good commercial proposition for any business man possessed of sufficient capital to take over large areas of land and force from the soil quantities of fertility-reducing crops which he can sell at great profit without regard to quality, and continue to do so until the fertility of the land is exhausted. He is not financially interested in the fertility of his land, knowing that it will last him long enough to provide him with substantial profits on the venture.

It arises secondly from a system which supports and encourages the inefficient farmer. Agriculture is an industry which requires the exercise of great energy, foresight, business ability, technical knowledge, and a genuine devotion to the conservation of the fertility of the soil. For the past hundred years the best of the country's manpower has gone to feed the machines. Those left on the land tended to be either the dullards, or those unadaptable to changing conditions. A few remained through a genuine devotion to the land, but the overall standard was

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MACDONALD

inevitably lowered, and remains low to-day. There are, however, a few farmers of very high practical ability, intelligence and industry, and the evidence is that some of these men are producing from their farms double the quantity of produce that is obtained as an average for the area of land which they farm, and are, moreover, doing this with all regard to the quality of their produce and the maintenance of the fertility of their land. This evidence has led many to believe that this country can be made actually self-supporting in foodstuffs. Obviously, however, we shall not attain self-sufficiency so long as the majority of our farmers are producing only 50 per cent. of the potential output. From this viewpoint the policy of subsidies is in effect the provision of public funds to enable the bad farmer to continue to farm inefficiently.

I submit that the first objective in any policy for increased agricultural prosperity should be to return to the land the energy, intelligence and ability which during the last hundred years have been absorbed into the towns. No doubt this was a consideration behind the increased subsidies, but these are only scratching at the surface of the problem, and leave untouched the present system of commercial corruption on the one hand and slow inefficiency on the other. Something more radical is needed before the type of recruit which the industry needs can be induced to leave the town. Induced is perhaps hardly the word. There are thousands of our young men sick at heart from the frustrations of the industrial life who would turn to the land were there any chance of finding openings adequate to their ability. An extra ten shillings on the agricultural labourer's wage will not meet their need.

Wartime efficiency was achieved not only by subsidies, but by education, research, the advisory services, and direction of the individual farmer in a planned economy. Let us now concentrate less on the subsidies, which could never form the basis of a long-term plan, and concentrate more on the other remedies. We need a great expansion of agricultural education, the facilities for which are quite inadequate for the present demand, and we need an extension and re-planning of the advisory services. These should be manned by full-time qualified officials having control over relatively small areas, and a high degree of knowledge and efficiency on their part will be required. Inefficiency on the part of the farmer arises from either lack of knowledge or plain slackness. The object will be to remedy the former and to weed out the latter. Power of direction must not be shirked but will need to be wisely used. Perhaps the test of success should be whether the advisory body can support itself by its usefulness to the farming community, and to this end the cost of each advisory centre should be borne by the farmers in the area which it covers. They will not resent the fee if they can see the benefits of the service in their increased profits.

H. W. HARDSTONE

53, Sidcup Road, Lee, S.E.12.

SIR,—Dr. Joad with his inexhaustible store of knowledge has always given me a guilty sense of inferiority. But I must thank him for his article Farming Impressions. Such nonsense from his pen has restored my self-confidence.

Farmers are doing very well for themselves, he says, repeating the cry of so many people with little knowledge of the subject, and yet his own experience has been that his costs rose by 33⅓ per cent. in a few months and 50 per cent. in a year, and he hopes that one day he "may subtract a thimbleful from the immense ocean of losses."

Dr. Joad is annoyed with farmers because they do not explain technicalities in simple language, and he sees some deep motive in this. It happens in every trade. Garage hands and philosophers are probably a great deal worse than farmers. And why should he expect them to explain terms, which to them are everyday language, to someone who simply does not take in what he is told, and in any case does not remember?

His censure of farm workers for not earnestly explaining the way of doing things to novices is just as unreal. Making fun of novices is the one subject on which the workers of the world would unite.

Brickhouse Farm, Surrey. E. HAMBERG

THE POLICE AND THE FASCISTS

SIR,—It is with great satisfaction that this Divisional Labour Party views the forceful policy that the Home Secretary is now adopting towards Fascism. We do, however, feel that there is still much scope for the further enforcement of the law with a view to frustrating the spreading of dangerous Fascist doctrine. In particular we believe that there is no obligation upon the police to wait upon the actual commission of an offence under S.5 of the Public Order Act, 1936, before taking action, as the following facts show.

1. Any meeting "giving firm and courageous persons in the neighbourhood of such assembly ground to *apprehend* a breach of the peace in consequence of it" is an Unlawful Assembly, according to Mr. Justice Charles in *R.* v. *Graham & Burns*.

On six successive Sundays breaches of the peace have occurred at or after the Fascist meetings in Ridley Road, Dalston. In *Duncan* v. *Jones* the then Lord Chief Justice Hewart said:

"It is the duty of a police officer to prevent *apprehended* breaches of the peace."

It must have become clear to all reasonable men after the first of these meetings that further breaches of the peace would ensue from them, and the police could and should have prevented their recurrence by prohibiting these Fascist meetings in that district thenceforth.

2. In Dalston a Fascist speaker drank a toast to the crowd from a glass marked "P. J."

The consequence of this conduct was a breach of the peace and eight men were charged.

It is laid down in *Wise* v. *Dunning* that the law regards "a breach of the peace as the *natural* consequence of insulting language" and conduct.

It is therefore the duty of the police to prevent all Fascist meetings in predominantly Jewish areas, where conduct of this sort will inevitably lead to a breach of the peace. (Indeed, the North London Stipendiary Magistrate said that the police should have brought the organisers of the meeting, mentioned above, before him.)

Should the police not forestall further meetings of this sort, then it will be for the local residents to see that the Articles of the Peace are exhibited to the Fascist leaders (at Quarter Sessions), and that they are bound over to keep the peace.

3. In areas of London and the country where, because of the absence of Jewish and "coloured" elements, abusive Fascist street-meetings may not be *per se* Unlawful Assemblies, the police have no business to prevent the public from putting questions to Fascist speakers. If breaches of the peace are feared, then the meeting should be closed; if there is no fear, then there should be no police interference (of the type that Mr. Ede admitted did occur in Hogarth Road in this Divisional Area).

In view of the above facts it seems to this Party that there is somewhere a misinterpretation of police powers and duties in connection with Fascist meetings, and that the police, presumably acting upon their instructions, are not adequately fulfilling their function of upholding the peace and security of the realm.

PEGGY CRANE, *Chairman*
HENRY BUDD, *Secretary*
South Kensington Labour Party

41 Redcliffe Square,
S.W.10.

SIR,—It is surely incumbent upon those who, like Mr. Jager, call for the suppression of Fascist activity, to tell us how it is to be done. Do they propose to reintroduce the principle of 18B (disturbing enough even in time of war), and if so what is to be the yardstick to replace that of endangering the war effort?

If, on the other hand, we are to have a statute, it must be capable of application by the Courts and

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begin by defining a Fascist. Can that be done without, for example, catching the Communists in the same net?

Even if that hurdle is surmounted, what is the statute to forbid? Shall the mere holding of certain political opinions, and their peaceful advocacy, be made criminal? I do not believe that Mr. Jager would urge this Fascist-Communist principle upon his fellow legislators if he fully considered its implications. Then what is there left to put in the statute?

The law as it stands (I do not say it is being fully enforced) is equipped to deal with any breach of the peace or threat of such, as with any attempt to overthrow lawful authority. By all means let us combat Fascist ideas, but it is neither desirable nor practicable to combat ideas of any sort with policemen and prisons.

Sanderstead, Surrey. JAMES PICKLES

HOLIDAYS ABROAD

SIR,—In your issue of September 6th you refer to the cutting off of holidays abroad as a thing to be deplored, and insofar as those holidays have given a short release from strain, everybody must agree. Yet they have had their shadow side, which has been brought home with great force to those of us who have to live our lives outside of England.

The holiday-maker here in Switzerland, for instance, has seen Switzerland through holiday eyes, in the brightest season, and in the framework of the most efficient tourist industry in the world. He has, unfortunately, jumped to the conclusion that he has participated for a moment in Swiss life. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He has not.

The results of this error have been twofold. The contrast between holiday and workaday world has led to vociferous complaints about everything in England, and I actually know Swiss people who used to love and trust the English tradition who have begun to doubt whether England will ever recover. If England's name is to be restored to honour among the nations, this is hardly the way to set about it.

Still worse, these holidays, instead of being a refreshment sending the holiday-makers back to the grim tasks of home with renewed vigour, have in many cases implanted in them a nagging and durable discontent. As one correspondent who had spent his holidays in Switzerland wrote to me—" Why should we be kept in this country (i.e. England) where there is nothing to look forward to? "

One glimpse of the reality of Swiss life would work wonders. This " earthly paradise " is only kept going by a relentless toil such as England never knew until the last war. Add to that the struggle with rocketing food and clothing prices, the pall of cloud which hangs over the bigger Swiss towns during the winter, the annual electricity crisis at winter's freezing end, the laundry which won't come home, and all the spiritual and mental difficulties which beset a small, over-populated and over-educated country, and a picture emerges of the daily distresses of the human condition which may approach conditions in England far more closely than the tourist is ready to believe.

Nobody grudges the tourist his enjoyment. It is the illusion which is really pernicious.

Zurich, Switzerland. MARY HOTTINGER

SMEAR STORIES

SIR,—Critic's story about Mr. and Mrs. Bevan was told to my brother only last week by a retired general living somewhere in the southern counties.

In this version the victims were two elderly ladies of limited means whose country cottage (their only home) had been requisitioned for war purposes. In spite of repeated applications, its return had been refused by the Ministry, and the ladies had been compelled to continue an expensive and uncomfortable existence in hotels. One day, so the story goes, they took a fancy to visit their property and see how it was getting on. They were cheered on arrival, to find the garden bright with flowers, and the cottage well kept up and in excellent condition, quite contrary to their expectation of a Government Department. A knock at the door was answered by Miss Jenny Lee in person, who was discovered to be living there with her husband. The story went on to say that there were, of course, secretaries and suchlike about the place to give some colour to the idea that it was used as an office, but in actual fact the Minister and his wife were undoubtedly in residence, and intended to continue so. The only suggestion missing that might have improved the story is that Miss Lee was washing up the breakfast crockery in the mink coat of which she deprived the film star!

It would be interesting to follow this story further. Perhaps some of your readers can do so? Does it ever get any nearer an origin than fourth-hand?

53, Albany Street, CEDRIC WALLIS
Regent's Park, N.W.1.

SOVIET LITERATURE

SIR,—In saying that the Church " encouraged the development successively of Romanesque and Gothic," Mr. Mortimer conveys a false impression. The Church did not in this connection act as a patron encouraging new ideas. Romanesque and Gothic grew out of the practical and ritual demands of the Church—increased size, fireproof roofs, greater number of altars, etc. The master masons in trying to carry out these demands developed Gothic architecture.

I still submit that it is possible for artists to be subject to a rigid authority, restricting even the liberty to experiment in form in the case of the visual arts (for example, the Byzantine mosaicists preserved a living art for seven centuries), provided always that that authority possesses a particular quality. This I suppose to be the ability to reconcile the artist and his fellow-men both to their total environment (the universe) and to one another. It was the virtue of Christianity that it could do this as long as its dogmas were as credible as any other beliefs of the time. Communism, on the other hand, cannot do this, nor can any other contemporary system.

Lamorna, Cornwall. JOHN ARMSTRONG

SKIRTS

SIR,—Critic, by inference, must have been one of those bold men who defied fashion and wore trousers without turn-ups in obedience to the Board of Trade. He may even have campaigned in favour of wooden-soled shoes for men: I was not always able to get THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION during the war so perhaps I missed his efforts. Nevertheless, it may be a relief to him to know that there is a case to be made for longer skirts both for comfort and for economy.

A long skirt is much warmer than a short one. It is much less embarrassing to the wearer in a high wind (or a Tube station corridor), and one does not have to think about it all the time when sitting down. No one, after all, has suggested a floor-length skirt, and for heavy work and active sports we shall continue to wear slacks and shorts.

A long skirt can be much narrower than a short one (see remarks above *re* sitting down), and is much more economical with stockings. Stockings usually run at the knee, and if knees are not visible a much more heavily darned stocking can be worn.

As for men finding short skirts more comely, unless their sole criterion is the amount of leg revealed, it seems quite incredible. No one with a sense of line could find a dress cut short at the knee anything but hideous. The ballet has taught most of us the aesthetic advantages of a longer skirt.

MOLLY COCHRANE

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DENT

BOOKS IN GENERAL

In his article on Soviet literature two weeks ago Mr. Raymond Mortimer referred to the work of Yuri Olesha, who had once been regarded as one of the major talents produced since the revolution. His novel *Envy,** a superb firework even in those days of formal experiment, was published in 1927 during the period of literary freedom; but presently the Party dunces—the official sausage makers, as Olesha would have called them—denounced the book. He was attacked in terms very similar to those later used against Zoschenko—the political mind always brings out the same old gramophone record—and in his frank and courageous reply Olesha said, "The creation of socialist industry has not been my theme. It is not a theme that runs in my blood system or comes through my breath. On this subject I could not be a genuine artist. I would be compelled to lie, to invent. I should lack what one calls inspiration." He admired the Communist State, but he demanded the right not to tell lies. These words were spoken in 1934.

By 1936 Olesha's name was heard no more; it was strangely absent from Alexei Tolstoy's survey of Soviet literature; and presently the only too familiar rumours went about. Olesha had "gone away," and foreign enquiries were answered by one of those broad, homely Buchmanite grins with which the Russians cheerfully still awkward questions. Why Olesha vanished no one knows, but evidently the worst did not happen. Last year the back-slider seems to have lifted his head again. He has been seen, not in the front rank of Soviet letters, but properly distant in the national revival of Turkmenia.

Luckily for us a new edition of *Envy* has just been published in this country. As a novel it is marked by the brilliant, perhaps the too brilliant, Catherine-wheel fire of "modernism." It might be the work of a theatrical Kafka. But if *Envy* has the embarrassing charm of a book that recalls the literary sins of our youth, it has lasted (as we now see) because of its profoundly Russian and traditional qualities. During the war there was a recall to tradition in Russia, but the work produced under this suasion was, at its best, mere museum copying; compared with Olesha's truly traditional work this other lacked imaginative vitality. The subject of *Envy* was contemporary but it was fundamental and full. Babichev, the super-canteen manager, the energetic and Sandow-like Commissar of the sausage industry, is the robot-communist of the time—"Ah, he's a genius that Babichev. He has created a sausage. Let me congratulate you. I feel I want to kiss you"—and Kavelerov, the drunken vagrant whom he rescues from the gutter, is the scum who is unworthy to live in the new society. Babichev heroically roars; Kavelerov, the crawling and fretting little egoist, whines and spies on him. We are looking at the conflict of the new and the old but in grotesque and comic terms. At first Babichev is worshipped by Kavelerov; then the latter begins to sneer at his rescuer and Babichev is made to appear as a simple, vulgar Neanderthaler. There is a delicious moment when the innocent Babichev looks up from writing his absurd, high-powered directives and inquires, without warning, "Who is this Jocasta?" Scorning the world of the emotions he has become uncomfortably aware of, the first, bewildering twitchings of the Oedipus complex. Why has he rescued the worthless Kavelerov? Why has he adopted the delightful young football star, Volodya? Why is he so concerned that Volodya shall marry his niece? Kavelerov watches Babichev's troubles with delight. He discovers an ally in Babichev's mad brother Ivan, who has invented a machine called "Ophelia," which is going to lead a revolt of the feelings and affections against the worship of the machine state. Ivan dominates Kavelerov:

> "My friend," says Ivan "envy is gnawing at your vitals. We envy the coming era. If you like, this is the envy of old age . . . You are the bearer of a historical mission. You are so to speak a clot. You are a clot of envy from a dying age."

Kavelerov asks what he must do.

> "My friend, either you must reconcile yourself to it . . . or you must kick up a devil of a row. Or you must make your exit with a bang. Slam the door behind you. That's the most important thing, go out with a bang. So that a scar remains on the jaw of history; take that damn you. In any case they wont accept you, but don't give up without a fight."

But while these two are preparing their fantastic revolt on behalf of individual fantasy, affection and fame, a new generation grows up. The heroic young footballer adopted by Babichev points out there are more important industries than sausage making, falls in love with the niece to the delight of everyone, and after a spectacular and ballet-like display of goal-keeping at the Moscow-Berlin match vindicates the sound-heartedness of the new order. Those sad dogs, Ivan and Kavelerov abandon their belief in the affections, as being beyond the reach of old men; and, adopting indifference, share the squalid charms of their appalling landlady on alternate nights.

Envy is a considerable comic novel and owes something to the traditional Russian passion for *Don Quixote*, a book the Russians have felt and understand more deeply than any nation except the Spanish. But comic literature is very rarely popular under powerful political or religious dispensations, for so many different meanings can be read into it. The symbolism changes its colour at every turn of the kaleidoscope. Unable to face their discomfort the political (like the religious) end by condemning the comic writers as vulgar, insipid and pointless, a charge that has been brought from time to time in every country against all of them from Cervantes to Gogol and from Dickens to Zoschenko.

At first the Party thought *Envy* was a scathing attack on the wastrels, the drones and the counter revolutionaries and they were delighted; presently the opposite notion occurred to them. There was Ivan's nasty remark about the persecution mania of Party members, their chronic jealousy; and his note that they confused history with time. The truth is that *Envy* is a deeply felt book, that Olesha is a dialectician of the heart and understands the duality of our feelings. His attitude to politics is not sectarian; it is the attitude of the imagination. The technical accomplishment of *Envy* probably annoyed his humdrum enemies more than anything else, for he managed to combine the freedom and breadth of the Russian novelists, their realism of speech and their unembarrassed eye for physical life, with many of the theatrical devices of fantasy and the daring of a poet. The nightmares and daydreams, the imaginary conversations, and soliloquies of Kavelerov as he writhes and prays and plots, are rendered lyrically and direct, without woolly explanation. Expressionism? Yes, there is more than a touch of that; but *Envy* is free of the marionette quality, the preaching sentimentalities of that over-emphatic German invention. Olesha's observation is close to the skin of life. Hetzke, the recklessly individualist German footballer plays for himself like a bourgeois—strange reading for Englishmen brought up on the team spirit—not for his side or his country.

He scores a goal and

> . . . looking down at his flashing toes, tripped daintily back to the centre of the field.

Hetzke is watched with adoring terror and superstition by the crowd. He is more than a footballer. He is the dreaded, the half-worshipped West itself. But if this is the most strangely reported football match in fiction, it catches common feeling with exhilaration:

> Whenever Hetzke gained possession of the ball, Valya, sitting up in the heights, screamed as though she were about to witness some horrible crime. Hetzke left our backs standing with the speed of his attack and took a shot at goal. Valya pressed closer to her neighbour grasping both his hands in hers with but one thought in mind—to hide her eyes from the catastrophe—but out of the corners of her averted eyes she continued to watch the movement of the swarthy—smoke-blackened after passing through fire—Hetzke.

That last sentence has clearly been too much for the translator. There is, indeed, a certain strain in Olesha's pictorial language and his short sentences; and the English of this particular translation by P. Ross is frequently unhappy; but when I read of someone whose cheeks are "like a pair of knees," I respond at once to a talent for the grotesque as I also respond to the "sin" of formalism which was Olesha's when he wrote:

> Suppose I were lucky enough to come across the ideally frivolous man, I would likewise say to him: 'Step forward and show us the quintessence of frivolity so that the audience may applaud it.'

Politically directed literature is sterile because committees never see how fertilising aesthetic "sin" can be. Olesha wrote a readable socially-conscious novel precisely because of this cross-breeding. The debased imitations of Tolstoy and others into which Soviet literature has since fallen have never been impregnated.

Among other things Olesha raises the question of the position of the artist in the totalitarian state. The demand for freedom was made more boldly in Kaverin's *The Unknown Artist,** published in the same volume as *Envy*. Kaverin is a far less liquid and volatile writer, and although his matter does not date his elaborate modernistic manner does. As Mr. Gleb Struve points out in a valuable introduction to both books, the irony is that it was Kaverin later on who compromised and submitted. A writer may thrive on the preaching of revolution but he is its natural victim. The pessimistic dictum, "All art is propaganda," dissolves into the blank command: "Only our propaganda is art." And political criticism, once so stimulating, easily degenerates into the prosecutor's casuistry. Caught in that net the writer wakes up too late to rediscover the fundamental hostility between the wintry political will and the creative imagination. They inhabit different climates.

Two pre-revolutionary books have also been reissued. First Bunin's *The Well of Days,** a gracious evocation of the life of the impoverished nobility which is outmatched by its richer predecessors in the genre. The great Russian impulse had gone by Bunin's time. It was pretty well dead by the time of Andreyev, but *Judas Iscariot** and *Phantoms* are worth reading. Andreyev was a thin, tired scratchy writer who, too often, made hysterical and intoxicated attempts upon subjects that were beyond him. *Judas Iscariot* however succeeds even if it does not do what it pretends. It is, in a sense, an earlier and more solemn statement of the Babichev-Kavelerov theme: the ambivalent attitude of the ordinary man to his hero. How many times this theme occurs in Russian literature where the character of the liar, the hypocrite and traitor has been portrayed in the largest terms, above all, of course, in *The Golovlyov Family,* Andreyev like all his race excelled in catching the detail of physical life. In the torture scene where Jesus is flung to the ground by the soldiers, the beginnings of hysteria are described:

> Loud guffaws resounded and Judas also smiled—as though with iron fingers someone's strong hand had torn his lips apart. So were Judas's lips deceived.

Wonderful observation, but already the theatrical note which followed the golden age of Russian writing is there, as it is in Olesha.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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* ENVY. By Y. Olesha. Translated by P. Ross.
THE UNKNOWN ARTIST. By V. Kaverin. Translated by P. Ross. *Westhouse.* 9s. 6d.
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If you wanted to see Lloyd George in his later years you arranged it through Mr. Sylvester, his efficient but harassed political secretary. Now that I have read Mr. Sylvester's account of Lloyd George, I understand why he was harassed. Here is the explosion of innumerable stored-up exasperations: exasperations with the Lloyd George who told Mr. Sylvester at short notice to prepare a trip to the Continent for a large party, and then changed the route almost every day, so that Mr. Sylvester spent most of the holiday on the telephone apologising to one hotel and trying to cajole another; the Lloyd George who according to his own admission was so "spoilt" that he could not undress or dress himself without assistance, could not find anything he wanted, could not obey a summons to see the Prime Minister without changing into a new suit at the last minute, arriving hot and angry because he first lost his new tie and then found it in the car and put it on during the journey to 10 Downing Street. Much more serious, we are given a picture of a vain and hesitating Lloyd George unable apparently to decide what role, if any, to play in the last war. It is clear that Mr. Sylvester was profoundly shocked; he could never forget the contrast between this Lloyd George and the great man he first watched in action from his vantage post as confidential shorthand writer to Lord Hankey during the first world war and whom he later accompanied to the conferences at Cannes and Genoa and during his triumphal reception in America and Canada. He recalls, on the authority of notes taken at the time, various attempts made sometimes indirectly and sometimes personally by Mr. Churchill himself to persuade Lloyd George to join the Cabinet.

Why were they all unsuccessful? Mr. Sylvester explains that Lloyd George was obsessed by the habit of political manoeuvring, that it was always "tactics," waiting for the right moment—until the moment had passed. That, I think, is only part of the explanation. Lloyd George's hesitations were in part personal and in part political. He was jealous of Winston and could not make up his mind to play second fiddle to him. On more than one occasion he said to me: "Winston has always loved war. Now he's got his war and won't let it go. Yet he'll have to make peace some time." This opinion was before Hitler's invasion of Russia made victory a plausible theory. It was also the period when Lloyd George was needed. He spoke of himself as Britain's "last card." Did that mean, as Mr. Churchill at last suggested in the House of Commons, that Lloyd George was waiting to play the part of Pétain? Or was it just that he could not make up his mind to respond to a call to play any part less splendid than that of Clemenceau?

In truth the second world war found Lloyd George in an emotional and intellectual confusion. He had a bad conscience about Versailles and therefore easily fell a sucker to Hitler and Ribbentrop when in 1936 he paid his German visit, of which Mr. Sylvester gives a most interesting account. But he never for a moment shared the Nazi views of Soviet Russia, and in the period leading up to the war the Council of Action, which worked under L.G.'s orders, threw its weight on to the side of collective security. On occasion Lloyd George even spoke at mass meetings against the Chamberlain policy. But this did not make him silly enough to support our guarantee to Poland in March 1939. He was almost the only politician far-sighted enough to denounce as irresponsible folly a guarantee to Poland that could not be fulfilled without the Russian alliance. He was mistaken, but not inconsistent when in October 1939 he hoped, like G.B.S., to call off the war after the defeat of the Poles. I remember his telling me on the telephone at that time that he had never in his life had so great a response to any campaign as he had to articles in the Sunday press trying to stop the war. Mr. Sylvester's notes of this period are scrappy, but he has a revealing story of how Lloyd George intended to open his peace campaign in a speech in Wales, but was put off by learning that his audience would only tolerate his views on peace aims if he began by making it clear that he thought Hitler ought to be defeated. He never got this point clear; he thought there must be a negotiated peace, but as he explained to me, you could not negotiate a peace when you were losing. When you were winning you would not want to do so!

The best thing would have been for L.G. to become chairman of a Food Production Council. That opportunity passed through a misunderstanding. Mr. Sylvester is probably right in saying that Lloyd George would have been rejuvenated if he had found himself in a position of great responsibility. He was by nature a man of action, and if he had been able to overcome his vanity, his jealousy of Churchill and his instinct not to join what he believed was a losing team (which he would not be in a position to rescue), Lloyd George might have ended with a spectacular and effective burst of energy. As it was, for the first time in his career he fell, as Mr. Sylvester said, into the trap against which an old Welsh newspaper editor warned him as a young man when he went into politics: "Never get sour." Judging from my own memories of Lloyd George in his old age, admiring his apples and listening to his gay reminiscences of other politicians, I would have said that he was strikingly successful in obeying this advice after twenty years in the political wilderness. But after reading Mr. Sylvester's book of revealing jottings, I see that exile had in fact done its usual job of warping judgment. Mr. Sylvester would be the last to say that his book gave a complete picture of Lloyd George. It only touches on his great days of leadership, and though it is in many respects a reticent book, it is mainly concerned with a side of genius which its admirers would prefer to keep concealed. Mr. Sylvester is aware of the genius and constantly mentions it, but the man he knew intimately was not so much a statesman as an old and irritable *prima donna*, talented, I should say, beyond all others who have strutted on the political stage in this century; like other *prima donnas*, lovable, intractable, unreasonable, and sometimes just petty and cantankerous.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

PICTURE BOOKS

Masterpieces of Painting from the National Gallery of Art. Ed. HUNTINGTON CAIRNS and JOHN WALKER. *Batsford.* £3 3s.

Cézanne. Intro. BENEDICT NICOLSON. *Lindsay Drummond.* 25s.

Picasso. Intro. JOHN RUSSELL. *Lindsay Drummond.* 25s.

Matisse. Intro. DENYS SUTTON. *Lindsay Drummond.* 25s.

Rubens. Ed. JOZEF MULS. *Falcon Press.* 17s. 6d.

Art in Modern Ballet. By GEORGE AMBERG. *Routledge.* £3 3s.

À Pablo Picasso. By PAUL ELUARD. *Secker and Warburg.* 35s.

French Tapestry. Ed. ANDRÉ LEJARD. *Elak.* £1 15s.

The Art of the French Book. Ed. ANDRÉ LEJARD. £2 10s.

Lost Treasures of Europe. Ed. HENRY LAFARGE. *Batsford.* 30s.

Twelfth Century Paintings at Hardham and Clayton. Introduction by CLIVE BELL. *Miller's Press, Lewes.* £2 2s.

Littering my already too book-encumbered room, a pile of large illustrated books call reproachfully for notice. If I have procrastinated, it is because most of them disappoint in one way or another. To begin with, coloured plates are usually infuriating, whether or not one knows the works that they pretend to represent. A lot of people like them? Of course; and a lot of people like modernistic furniture, garden-gnomes in concrete, Royal Academy paintings and artificial custard: nor would it be right, even if one had the power, to deprive them of their bizarre enjoyments. To a fastidious eye, however, coloured reproductions of paintings usually seem like music sung out of tune. Take the handsome anthology of pictures from the Washington National Gallery: most of the pictures are not only magnificent but unfamiliar to us Europeans, and the editors have placed opposite each plate a relevant passage of prose or verse, a delightful notion very well executed. But the colours are calumnious, and in one instance, the Van Gogh "Mousmé," the editors have rashly given us the artist's account of the colours he has used, which are quite different from those shown in the plate. Some of the pictures, moreover, in this superb collection appear to be shockingly discoloured by varnish: the reproduction of a Turner has a "golden glow," as of sunset; and opposite is a quotation from a critic who saw it when first painted and who talks of it possessing "the positive coldness peculiar to moonlight." The Washington collection must now be one of the most splendid in the world, and to those who have not seen it this book is informative and tantalising.

Contemporary paintings suffer even more than Old Masters from imprecise colour-reproduction, because their virtue depends so overwhelmingly on exactly calculated colour-relationships. In the Lindsay Drummond series, printed in France, the colour seems to me a travesty, and I wonder what the writers of the excellent introductions think of the plates they have found themselves associated with.

The plates in *Art in Modern Ballet* are few of them coloured. This is an American book, valuable chiefly for what seems a very thorough list of modern ballets, over eight hundred of them, with details of the choreographers, composers and painters responsible. The American and Mexican designs are very uneven, and there are some glaring omissions in the designs chosen to represent Europe—nothing by Miro or Sutherland. The book however reminds us of what a sumptuous variety of superb decors we were given between the wars. Diaghileff, in particular, commissioned almost all the greatest contemporary artists. In England the leading painters are usually neglected by those who order designs for opera and ballet. However much one may approve of encouraging the young, it cannot be sensible to neglect systematically, as the Vic-Wells and now Covent Garden do, the most prominent artists of the older generation.

The Picasso book contains over a hundred excellent reproductions of works from all the various periods of the master, with an introduction and a number of poems by Eluard, inspired by friendship and admiration for Picasso. These are printed in French, and the book represents an enterprise in publishing that deserves the warmest encouragement. Looking through this book I feel more convinced than ever that Picasso is the most gifted painter of our time. Has the instability of our civilisation prevented him making the best use of his genius? This seems likely when one considers how many of his works are, as it were, on the frontier of art. How ironical that the pontiffs of Moscow should have placed upon their Index the painter who has ventured most dangerously far from the Ivory Tower, the most eminent of Western Europeans to become a Party Member!

French Tapestry and *The Art of the French Book* are a pleasant pair of books, excellently illustrated, and such colour-plates as they include are much above the average. The staggering beauty of the Gothic tapestries has made many people blind to the splendours of the later work; in the V. and A. exhibition, moreover, the Eighteenth Century was sadly under-represented. On the other hand almost all the modern tapestries seem to me deplorable; well as Lurçat understands the medium, his designs are prickly, his colours (as one would expect) vulgar, and Gromaire's work already looks pathetically dated. The book includes photographs of tapestries after Matisse, Picasso, Braque and Rouault which were not shown at the V. and A. Admirable in colour and design, these have been executed with wonderful misapplied skill so that they reproduce even the brush strokes of the oil-paintings that they are taken from—an offence against the nature of the medium. What one would like to see is tapestry translating the designs of these great painters with the same freedom and taste as was used to translate the designs of Boucher.

The Art of the French Book is mostly concerned with the art of illustrating books ; printing itself has a less glorious history in France than in Italy or England. But in illustrating the French have been unrivalled. Oddly the one poor period is the second half of the Nineteenth Century, when French painting was particularly rich. This book is much the most enjoyable of those I am discussing.

In *Lost Treasures of Europe* there are over four hundred photographs of buildings and pictures damaged or destroyed during the war. I found it almost too painful to examine, and I learnt from it of several disasters of which I was unaware, notably the wrecking of Rothenburg-ob-der Tauben, a town unrivalled in its Dürer picturesqueness. This book unfortunately is far from accurate nor does it make any mention of some of the gravest losses, e.g., a number of pictures from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, a list of which I have not yet seen and the cause of whose destruction *after* the Armistice remains so far as I know obscure.

Mr. Clive Bell's essay on the Romanesque paintings in two Sussex churches has all the liveliness one expects from him, on whatever subject he writes. If he had chosen to be a pamphleteer instead of an art-critic, I fancy that he would now be one of the most feared men in England. I have not the scholarship to discuss his conclusions, though I could argue that the influence at Hardham was Persian rather than Chinese. The photographs are admirable, and the tracings by Miss Caroline Lucas are most skilfully arranged to help one to decipher the photographs. One may hope that this book will set an example, and that we shall in time be given a more trustworthy representation of English wall-painting than is provided by Mr. Tristram's water-colours. The replicas in the Palais Chaillot in Paris show that Romanesque paintings can be copied with great exactitude.

ROGER MARVELL

GREEK ULCER

The Greek Dilemma. By WILLIAM H. MCNEILL. *Gollancz.* *7s. 6d.*

William McNeill, Assistant Military Attachè at the American Embassy in Athens from November 1944 to June 1946, has here written the best history of Greece so far published from the Italian invasion of 1940 until King George II's return.

A book by a Liberal hostile to Communism who yet rarely allows his anti-Communism to blind him to what are the plain facts—" The Russians have supported the Greek Left morally : the British have supported the Right by arms and, in conjunction with the United States, economically as well "—provides with a wealth of detail the answer to the evasions which in the Commons and in Whitehall have attempted to pass for a Greek Policy. McNeill's view, contrary to the Churchillian, " We wanted nothing from the Greeks : we had no ulterior motive in going there," is that

> The whole policy of the British Government was directed towards preventing EAM from taking over control of the Government of Greece : their first concern was that the Government of Greece should always be friendly towards them and the men who shaped British policy for Greece were by this time firmly convinced that an EAM Government would not be friendly.

Whether the British intervention to this end could have been maintained successfully had EAM played strictly according to democratic rules, whatever the provocations offered, is questionable : but the interventionist policy, whenever endangered by hostile world opinion, was always salvaged by the mistakes and crimes of Communist leaders who displayed—and as Porphyrogenis' recent Strasbourg speech shows, still do display—a capacity for playing into the hands of Greek reaction and British military leaders which has to be witnessed to be believed. On the military disarmament issue which precipitated our armed intervention, McNeill inclines to the view (which I have always held) that the EAM demands were moderate and their proposals just. The story brings out quite correctly the uncompromising nature of the intervention culminating in Churchill's vetoing of the concessions to the Left which the Greek Premier himself wished to make to avoid war.

Has this policy of treating EAM since 1943 as an enemy organisation been justified by subsequent events ? The Porphyrogenis speech and some of the recent activities of General Markos allied with the Soviet vetoing of a permanent Frontier Commission may seem a justification. Yet this is to forget how adept the Middle East section of the Foreign Office has proved at disintegrating an " enemy " organisation (whether EAM or Zionist) by refusing in private the reasonable demands of moderate elements until the desperation thereby evoked allows the extremists to take over and make unreasonable demands which can then be refused in public with unction and sweet reasonableness. Today, EAM without the Socialists and with a fraction only of its once great Venezelist following is a very different movement from what it was in December 1944. This, the Foreign Office may regard as their triumph : others, aware that only in EAM in recent years has there appeared any sign of the social idealism which could make of Greek politics something different from the personal and corrupt café manoeuvring which they have been since the Liberation, may think it a tragedy.

Having by a policy, wittingly or unwittingly, destroyed the Centre, the British and American Governments " between extremes have chosen to support the Right." It is the " high cost of the Greek Right " which the British Government, though apparently only too willing, have recently found themselves unable to pay : 130 million and scarce a new factory to show for it ; a Budget in which the security and armed services account for more than 50 per cent. ; and a succession of ministries which, as McNeill states,

> are on the whole little interested in economic matters. Their attitude was one of laissez-faire, with polite attention to the wishes of their friends who could profit from a complacent Government policy on matters of taxation and contracts. To make the system work they counted on loans from Britain and America.

But the wiser Americans now shrink from handing over another 130 million to such people : hence the recent Embassy campaign to win the Sophoulis Liberals into forming a Government to attempt once again the economic reforms which over a year ago cost Varvaressos his job.

McNeill correctly assesses the role of the Gendarmerie as enthusiastic agents of German Occupation policy and notes that less than a hundred have been purged. He omits to mention Papandreou's pledge to the Greek people in the summer of 1944 that because of their role they would be abolished and an entirely new force created—one of many unhonoured pledges. Though noting hesitancy in trying collaborators he omits the fact that no one of officer status has

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JOHN MURRAY

yet been executed—though many Resistance men and women have been. The role of the British military in the all-important Police and Military Missions is assessed for the first time in print, but responsibility for entirely one-sided recruitment to the Security Services is rather too charitably attributed to the Greeks. Not sufficient is told of the persecution of the Left Centre which has allowed General Bakirdjis to be finally disposed of in exile and General Sarafis to be still on his island without trial or even a charge preferred after 14 months. Presumably there are some Greek waters too deep to be explored even by so courageous an American Liberal as the author proves himself. This book remains an essential guide to the only ex-Allied country whose present-day politicians of the Right regard their absence from any active anti-Nazi resistance group during the Occupation as a possible qualification for a job rather than as a matter for reproach.

LYALL WILKES

NELSON

Poseidon. By RENALT CAPES. *Sidgwick and Jackson.* 15s.

All the venerated figures of the past sooner or later come to the mincing-machine; and are dished up afresh with the condiments of modern biography. It is Nelson's turn by this time to be made into sausage meat. Indeed, he is long overdue for revaluation—to use the current name for the process But the biographers with the sharpest knives have flinched from the thankless task. Nelson carries too little meat as a character and too much bone. In public he was a demi-god—a man of heroic courage and inexhaustible determination. In private he was positively null—a sort of undeveloped schoolboy, as Mr. Capes suggests. "In common life," said Lord Minto, who knew him well "Lord Nelson had nothing whatever to distinguish him, except that he looked like a goose in his gait and manner."

Mr. Capes, I am glad to say, is not the man to make a sausage out of Nelson. His undiminished respect for the hero afloat is proclaimed in the title of the book—*Poseidon.* (But why the *Greek* god of the sea? Nelson had no Greek attributes that have come to light.) His appraisement of the goose ashore is untainted with any of the flippant condescension that would have oozed from the pen of many another biographer. Indeed, the author's attitude to his subject is positively old-fashioned. "Emma Hamilton is for many the beginning and end of Nelson's sinning" is a strange way to talk nowadays. That Nelson's passion for Lady Hamilton happened to be adulterous cannot be gainsaid, but surely we can dispense with a moral inquest. The remarkable feature in this famous love-affair was that it was lop-sided, a case of *un qui baise et un qui tourne la joue.* Whereas Nelson was infatuated with Lady Hamilton, Lady Hamilton's eye was focused on the nimbus of glory round Nelson's head rather than the man underneath.

In this personal study of Nelson, Mr. Capes's research adds little to our knowledge of his naval genius. Probably there is nothing more to be known. Genius, when not of the painstaking variety, is almost impossible to analyse. Nelson gave no impression of great intelligence; he was a poor navigator and an even worse sailor (he was always being seasick); his quick promotion in the service was not due to his ability, but to family influence and the deadly effect of the West Indies climate on senior naval officers stationed there. He was not from the first aware of his own talents (before he reached flag rank he was several times on the point of resigning from the Navy); and he did not study the art of naval warfare in books. Yet he became unquestionably one of the world's greatest admirals. True, he was fantastically brave; but he did not win his battles just by bravery. The secret lies hidden in that pouting underlip which he carried through life—the lip of the spoilt schoolboy. When he wanted a thing enough he had to get it—and everyone else must help him get it. And everyone else agreed with him. His superior officers and the men who served under him, even his enemies, could not resist that merciless pout.

Of necessity Mr. Capes treats Nelson's spectacular career at sea somewhat summarily, for the main interest of *Poseidon* lies in the mass of new information he has unearthed about the *affaire* with Lady Hamilton. Where the information comes from, Mr. Capes does not disclose—it is hard to forgive the absence of any bibliography—but I suspect that he has had access to the unpublished letters written by Nelson to Emma, which came to light some twenty years ago. The absence of any authority for the author's statements is particularly unfortunate as regards Lady Hamilton's early history, his version of which is often at complete variance with the hitherto accepted facts. Amy Lyon (this was Emma Hamilton's baptismal name) was christened in 1765—the date of her birth is still unknown—and started on her career as a kept mistress at a very early age. Mr. Capes states that she had *one* child as a result of these *liaisons*, the first "little Emma," born in 1781; and names the father as Captain Payne. "Little Emma" certainly existed, as the expense of her upbringing had to be provided by subsequent lovers, but she has been generally supposed to have been born in 1780 of no known father: the child born to Amy Lyon in 1781, whose father could not have been Captain Payne, is thought to have been still-born; and there is even a possibility of a third illegitimate child before 1780. Mr. Capes's cavalier treatment of these minor details might engender mistrust in his whole narrative; but I am prepared to accept the authenticity of the extracts from Emma's correspondence which he quotes, because they confirm and enlarge one's ideas of her character.

Emma was a good-natured, sentimental, pleasure-loving, deceitful woman of the prostitute type, with exceptional animal high spirits, remarkable adaptability to circumstance and considerable intelligence. As a human being she is far more interesting than Nelson; and the new light Mr. Capes is able to throw on her makes *Poseidon* a notable contribution to biography. There is only space to give two instances of her tactful deceitfulness. Although the liaison with Nelson had been the scandal of Europe for five years Emma apparently managed to conceal the physical nature of it from her husband until he died. Even the birth of Nelson's daughter, Horatia, under Sir William's nose in his Piccadilly house, was successfully camouflaged as a bout of indigestion; and we have Sir William writing to Nelson:—"All her convulsive complaints certainly proceed from a foul stomach . . . she is much better having vomited naturally." From Nelson she successfully concealed that she had ever had any children before Horatia; and we have Nelson writing to her on the same occasion: "I never had a dear pledge of love till you gave me one, and you, thank my God, never gave one to anybody else." A remarkably adaptable woman!

RALPH PARTRIDGE

THE BONE BENEATH THE GUM

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London, W.1.

right the finger post invites to a free-wheel run of repeating one's formula and repeating its success; to the left a grinding gradient on a road strewn with the possibilities of punctures. The boldness of publishing anything so apparently different from *Mine Own Executioner* as his new book is, then, to be applauded and the fact that the hill has been climbed on two flat tyres may be less important to Mr. Balchin, as a writer, than the fact that it has been climbed.

Lord I Was Afraid is, to quote the publishers, "not a Nigel Balchin novel in the ordinary sense. In fact it cannot be described technically as a novel at all." In short it is not a novel. It is a sort of distended charade in some 23 scenes written in play form but not meant for performance, in which three men and women of average, middle-class upbringing are conducted through a phantasmagoria of the problems of the inter-war generation. These are presented in a variety of symbolic scenes; a search for the Grail with interventions by the Fisher King, Satan in an opera hat, a Joan of Arc in armour, a sort of Rex Warner aerodrome, a Brain's Trust which suddenly becomes serious, a Department Store which sells what you should have not what you want. The tests they are put to and the odd situations they encounter they meet with a mixture of the bewildered cynicism, scepticism and an underlying layer of courage which I take—unless I have quite missed the writer's intention—to be characteristic of Mr. Balchin's contemporaries as he sees them. The nearest living relative to this work is *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, but that was about four times as short, was helped out by some good poetry and was actually stagable—yet it was a failure. One phrase in the publisher's apologetic blurb gives the clue, I hazard the guess, to the reason why Mr. Balchin has wanted to publish. "A Balchin novel in the ordinary sense" indicates that he is already "type-cast." He must see himself in the same danger as a new Hollywood discovery who, having made two successful films as a certain character, is faced with the prospect of playing the same role in different sets of clothes for the rest of his acting life. Mr. Balchin has himself contributed to this situation, for *The Small Back Room* and *Mine Own Executioner*, the one about unpicking a dangerous bomb, the other about unpicking a dangerous person, were at core the same novel. The plot and the *mis-en-scène* were in each case different, and because he is extremely able he more or less concealed by those means that both novels were obsessed with the same situation between the same husband and the same wife. There seemed to be something compulsive about this repetition and about the style with which Mr. Balchin explored the surface of it without getting any deeper the second time than the first. He drilled the tooth of the conflict mercilessly and thoroughly, and frequently ground remorselessly on the nerve; when what he ought to have been attacking was the infection of the bone beneath the gum. This concentration on surface is his chief defect. He is a writer who covers the outside inch by inch, tapping it all over with his hammer to find the weaknesses. What one listens for in vain is a reverberation from within.

For all its attempt at differences *Lord I Was Afraid* suffers from the same weakness. The range may be wider but it is not an inch deeper. The jokes are all verbal on a highly conscious level, puns, parodies, inversions, phrase-play, imitations. The phantasy scenes in which he places his six characters, come off, when they do come off, only on to the level of political cartoons where an ephemeral event is momentarily flashlighted by stating it in terms of another equally ephemeral. So, far the most successful scene in the book is a peace conference written in terms of a game of cut-throat, even the procedural preliminaries of who should deal and who cut being contested with the ferocity of a near-war. Even this goes on too long.

What we seem really to be presented with in *Lord I Was Afraid* is the raw material from which a novelist is working made up into a whole. As raw material, as a novelist's notes of conversations, situations, comments, it would have had a limited interest which as an attempt as a whole, it lacks. Mr. Balchin will be tired of being told by reviewers to forget this failure and return to his successes. If I were impertinent enough to offer advice, it would be to sift over this material for any light it might throw on the limitations of the novels. "As things are going now," remarks Dane in *The Great Good Place* "no one in the future will be able to face success." At least by publishing this book Mr. Balchin shows that he may be trying to face his own.

T. C. WORSLEY

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The Sand Kings of Oman. By RAYMOND O'SHEA. *Methuen.* 12s. 6d.

The Sand Kings of Oman is a term humorously applied by the Bedouin to the town sheikhs of the Trucial Oman region of south-eastern Arabia. Throughout his stay there as the commander of a desert air outpost, Mr. O'Shea contrived to remain on good terms with all of them, although his intercourse left him with no illusions about their character and their methods of local government. Some of the sheikhs he found to be just men, but far too many were feudal-minded despots, extravagant and jealous of their petty power, surrounded by corrupt ministers, against a background of sordid, and often murderous, political intrigue. When Mr. O'Shea is not castigating a succession of British governments whose *laissez-faire* policy has allowed the depredations of these ruffians to go unchecked, he writes entertainingly and with enthusiasm on less controversial topics; the history of the region, the Gulf pirates, the slave trade, oil, the pearl industry and the inescapable desert. His reflections on the history and economics of oil production are concise and well considered: even the characteristic dig at British lapses is not superfluous here.

The only journey of any length undertaken by the writer was a three-hundred-mile trip into the *Rub el Khali*, the Empty Quarter. From Sharjah he passed by Baraimi, the retreat of turbulent elements and wanted criminals, which he suspects to be still a centre of the slave trade, to Qara, where he wandered among the crumbling sandstone blocks of a yet unidentified city, hidden from the plain in a bowl on a plateau. Parts of this book lack polish and are carelessly edited, but this chapter, all too short, demonstrates the author's descriptive ability.

Towards a Classless Society. By H. D. HUGHES, M.P. Discussion Series No. 3 in Socialism To-day and Tomorrow. *Fabian Publications 6d.*

This is a sane and well-documented little pamphlet crammed with information and ideas. It traces the development of "class," once clearly defined by income and birth, from the days of serfdom up to classless figures of our modern society like Ernie

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Bevin and Gracie Fields. Mr. Hughes shows clearly that the greatest source of class distinction is still the division of the educational system between private and public schools which has produced, and maintains, the closed shop of the "Old School Tie" in the professions, the Services, and the Foreign Office. To overcome this difficulty, in part at least, he proposes that entry into universities should only be permitted to those whose abilities merit it. Successful candidates, who should be chosen by methods similar to those used by wartime selection boards for officers rather than by examination, would then be entitled to financial assistance up to the absolute limit of their needs. The total cost to the country would be about £10 million a year—not much to ensure that universities are really universal. Other topics discussed are the size of the proletariat, the division of the national wage cake and the reduction of the gap between rich and poor by taxation. With the information given there is enough in this pamphlet to provoke many fruitful discussions and to provide material for useful speculation on how far class distinction can ever be removed from any society.

Week-end Competitions

No. 918

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Six guineas are offered for the opening paragraph (limit 200 words) of a novel of the kind the competitor most dislikes. Entries by October 8th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 915

Set by Thomas Smallbones

A prize of six guineas is offered for a letter to the Minister of Labour from a "spiv," "eel," "butterfly," or "drone" defending his (or her) way of life. (200 words).

Report by Thomas Smallbones

The butterflies and the drones on the whole emerged the best. They have, as many of them pointed out, the most time at their disposal. A spiv's, on the other hand, is a restless volatile occupation, as is the eel's, and, while nearly all made several good cracks, few could keep on the job long enough to maintain the level. Some of the best kept up the character too well: they tried to dodge the word-limit. On the whole the lines of defence were less ingenious than I had expected. But here are a few of the less obvious. "I've me own ideas and if they are a bit modern, that aren't my fault" (Fare Play). "Let me tell you I'm an extremist—for Private Enterprise. That's what I am. I read the *Daily Express*" (S. Gee). "We spivs are social realists" (S. J. Sharpless). "Well, sir, I don't do no work and my missus say if she hadn't a had me to look arter she don't know whatever she should a done."

Alec Smart and the Revd. R. H. Lowe, with a letter very authentic in tone, were the last I regretfully discarded. I award a first prize of Three Guineas to Dorothy White for her brilliant "Joyce Grenfell" letter; One Guinea each to Noollab and Richard Pomfret and two consolation prizes of half-a-guinea to the last two entries printed which catch the spirit of the competition without adhering as strictly as they should to the conditions. I think that in this company that is permissible.

DEAR MR. THING (I never can remember which one you are).

Aren't you being rather beastly? I mean I don't think I'm a type. Who *is*, really? But I don't work in a factory or sulk behind the grating in a post office, so I suppose you mean me.

No, actually, I *have* a function besides looking after the poodles and Mummie. I do *amuse* chaps. I shouldn't get taken out if I didn't. You see, the tired business man has too much social sense these days to demand a mere tart, and one *is* in with all the head waiters who matter, which is *so* good for trade.

The trouble about your government is that it's made voluntary work seem the absolute end instead of rather heroic. But I'm old-fashioned enough to feel one shouldn't accept diamond bracelets until one's married You see, if the chaps are *happy*, well surely one's brightened this frightful world (which is more than you have, Mr. Thing), one's been *encouraging*—and well, couldn't we have a bite of lunch on Friday and then I could really explain. I think the Savoy would play if we didn't say who you were.

Yours forgivingly,
ANGELA LEPIDOPTERA
DOROTHY WRIGHT

DEAR SIR,—When we were kids, me and my mate was backward, see? We should've had special treatment to make us like other kids, then we might've grown up to be V.I.P.'s like you and the other Nobs.

But the Wicked Tories was in then so we didn't get no special treatment.

So we're still backward, see?

Yours sincerely,
THE SPIVS.

P.S.—*We* ain't grousing though.

NOOLLAB

DEAR GEORGE.—May I, a "butterfly," expound my avocation? I rise at noon (it's *far* too soon) for Beauty Preparation. A bath of foam, a currycomb, a massage of my torso; a touch of Veet, some radiant heat, and Greer am I—but more so!

Then round the town, to choose a gown, a hat, a fur, a nightie. The *coupons*, sir? Do you infer the Pound is not *Almighty?*

Thence to a date with someone's mate—They're really most diverting! They have the "gen" on How and When (did Grandma blench at *flirting?*).

I dance, I dine, a place is mine for any show I fancy; a wand is waved, my pathway laved in palm-oil necromancy. My face is known from Dee to Rhone, from Solent to Royal Ascot; my lightest hint will end in print—I am "The Tatler's" mascot!

And yet you ask that I unmask the reason for my being; that I defend my Means and End—You even start *decreeing!* Oh, fie! Oh, fie! The butterfly just IS—let no one query! Should you *still* doubt, well, how about a date—er—Georgie *dearie?*

Yours (?) FIFI
RICHARD POMFRET

ESTEEMED SPORT,—Your stable connections is acting outrageous. The Major begs to state that he is definitely not a Spiv like what he's been classed as. Since ten years, when the Major got his licence withdrawn by the Stewards of the Jockey Club for getting beat a short head on an animal what couldn't lick a crab at Margate, he has been in business as a genuine adviser to the sporting public. The Major's record is 100 per cent. winners and no hotpots and he is willing to wager a hundred nicker to a Corona cigar or a bottle of Bass with any sporting gentleman what disputes this boneified statement.

In conclusion, Sport, the Major puts it to you like one sportsman to another, would he be in business after ten years if he didn't earn his corn?

In view of what he has stated, as sure as God made little apples the Major is confident that you will instruct your connections to do you know what with the forms they have been persecuting him with.

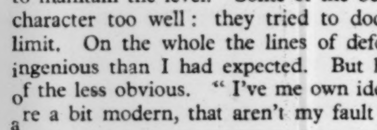
Yours respectably in business,
MISTER CHARLES HORSEFLY
(The Major)

P.S.—Lord Nelson for the Cambridgeshire!

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

DEAR MR. SMALLBONES,—Interested in a bottle of Johnny Walker and a pair of flannel trousers, coupon free? Then send me the smartest letter written by one of those intellectuals so that I can forward it to the Minister of Labour from yours truly. I'll see you get your reward by return of post. Please send leg and waist measurements.

JOE
RAYMOND NUNN



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THE annual general meeting of Telephone Rentals, Ltd., was held on Monday, September 22, in London, Mr. Fred. T. Jackson, O.B.E., Comp. I.E.E. (Chairman and joint managing director), presiding.

The chairman in the course of his speech said:

Our rental revenue amounts to £599,250, an increase of about £30,000 over that of the previous year, while the profit on trading and miscellaneous receipts amounts to £66,733 and compares with about £41,600 under the same heading last year.

The net profit on the year's operations amounts to £198,258. We have transferred £10,000 to general reserve and have made provision for dividends at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, the same rate as last year.

With most of the factories with whom we deal, the period between placing an order and the commencement of deliveries is between nine and twelve months. As a result on 1st January, 1947, we were in the position of having secured contracts representing an annual rental of over £100,000 per annum, which had not been installed.

By the end of the first half of 1947 most of the installations covered by these contracts had been fitted, but during that same period the volume of new business secured came in at a greater rate than that at which we were able to install without increasing the long completion period.

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In my address I have endeavoured to convey to you that your company is developing on progressive lines, and on safe lines financially. The report was adopted.

Appointments Vacant

ACHIMOTA College, Gold Coast. Wanted for Achimota Secondary School, teachers for following subjects, to School and Higher Cert. standard: English Literature, Classics, French, Geography. Salary £600 to £1,030, including overseas allowance. Prospect of promotion to senior posts, rising to maximum of £1,300. Candidates, either men or women, should have hons. degrees and be willing to enter into general school life. Quarters provided, but a deduction is made for rent. Free passages, medical and dental service. Leave to U.K. every 18 months. Appointments are pensionable. Further partics. and applic. forms from Secretary, Achimota Committee, Edinburgh House, 2 Eaton Gate, S.W.1.

UNIVERSITY of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, S. Africa. Applics. invited for a Lecturer in Psychology. Salary scale is £550×25—£800 p.a., plus a temporary cost of living allowance which at present amounts to £75 p.a. for married men or persons with dependents, and £46 16*s*. p.a. for others. A higher initial salary may be paid on ground of special qualifics. and exp. Membership of University Teachers' Provident Fund compulsory. Further partics. from Secretary, Universities Bureau of British Empire, 8 Park St. London, W.1. Closing date for applics. is November 10.

VICTORIA University College, Wellington, New Zealand. Applics. invited from grads. with good honours degrees for position of a Senior Lecturer in Psychology. Salary £750 (N.Z.) to £825 (N.Z.) p.a. (maximum) according to qualifics. and exp. Further partics. from Secretary, Universities Bureau of British Empire, 8 Park St. London, W.1. Closing date for applics. is November 14.

UNIVERSITY of Sydney. Senate will shortly proceed to appointment to Chair of Oriental Studies which will become vacant upon retirement of Professor A. L. Sadler. It will be glad to hear, before November 30, from anyone who would like to be considered for appointment. Duties require a specialist in Eastern Asiatic Studies, and, in particular, in Chinese and Japanese languages. Salary is £1,250 (Australian) p.a., but negotiations for a general increase in University salaries are in progress. To the salary the University adds a yearly sum equal to 10 per cent. by way of contribution to Sydney University Professorial Superan. System: the Professor's own contribution to system will be at rate of 5 per cent. of his salary. In addition, Professor will be entitled to receive a pension of £400 p.a. upon retirement after attaining sixty years. One year's leave granted on full pay every seven years or thereabouts. Travelling expenses paid as arranged at time of appointment.

AUCKLAND University College, Auckland, New Zealand. Applics. invited for a Lecturer in History. Salary at rate of £600 (N.Z.) p.a. rising to £700 (N.Z.) p.a. by annual increments of £25. Allowance for travelling expenses. Further partics. from Secretary, Universities Bureau of British Empire, 8 Park St. London, W.1. Closing date for applics. is November 1.

DEVON C.C. Children's Officer. Applics. invited from women expd. in children's welfare work, for appointment of Children's Officer, at an annual salary of £700, rising by annual increments of £25 to £800, plus cost of living bonus. Person appointed will be reqd. to use her own car in the service of the Council, and will be paid travelling and subsistence allowances, according to Council's scales. Appointment will be terminable on 3 months' notice on either side, and will be subject to the Local Government Superann. Act, 1937, and to the passing of a medical exam. Successful applicant will be reqd. to undertake care of children deprived of normal home life, for whom the Council are responsible, on lines recommended by the Curtis Committee, and for administrative purposes will be attached to staff of the Clerk of the Council. Pref. will be given to candidates who are not under age of 30 at date of appointment, and are Univ. Graduates with Social Science Diploma. Applics., with copies of not more than 3 testims., should be sent, by Oct. 11, to H. A. Davis, Clerk of the Council, The Castle, Exeter, from whom further partics. of the appointment may also be obtained.

WILTSHIRE C.C. Education Committee. The Council invite applics. for appointment of two Assistant Education Officers (men). Candidates must be graduates of a British University and must have had teaching exp. Duties involve liaison work with Governors, Managers, Teachers and Parents; but the officers will also be expected to assist generally in the administration of the new Education Acts. Salary scale is £500 p.a., rising by annual increments of £50 to £700 p.a., plus a temporary bonus, at present £59 16*s*. p.a. Commencing salary will, within the limits of the scale, be fixed according to the qualifics. and exp. of the candidate appointed. Appointment will be conditional on satisfactory evidence of medical fitness. Further partics. and applic. forms will be sent on request (stamped add. foolscap env. necessary). Applics. should be sent in as soon as possible; it is expected that interviews of selected candidates will be held towards end of October. P. A. Selborne Stringer, Clerk of the County Council, County Hall, Trowbridge.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Educ. Committee. Linton Village College. — Secondary Modern School.—Qualified Assistant Mistress reqd. for General Subjects, with some Needlework. Forms of application, which should be returned as soon as possible, may be obtained on receipt of a stamped and addressed foolscap envelope from Chief Education Officer (S), Shire Hall, Cambridge.

Appointments Vacant—continued

L.C.C. Applics. invited for post of principal of the Paddington Technical Institute, Saltram Crescent, W.9, which provides part-time day and evening instruction up to ordinary National Certificate and City Guilds standards in Mechanical, Electrical and Production Engineering and allied subjects. There is also a Secondary (Technical) School for boys in Engineering. Applicants should have had teaching and organising exp. in a Technical Institute and ability to maintain close touch with industries concerned. Salary: £950-£50-£1,100. Applic. forms and further partics. (stamped add. foolscap env. necessary) from Education Officer (T.1.) County Hall, S.E.1, returnable by November 1, 1947. (2777.)

L.C.C. Psychiatric Social Workers reqd. at Long Grove Hospital (for nervous and mental disorders), Epsom, Surrey. Candidates must hold Mental Health Certificate of London School of Economics or equivalent qualific. Will be reqd. to co-operate with medical staff in investigating history of mental cases and supervising social welfare of patients. Salary scale—£370 rising to £530 p.a. (commencing sal. according to exp.). For applic. form send stamped add. foolscap env. to Medical Officer of Health (MHS/B), Public Health Dept. (Mental Health Services), County Hall, Westminster Bdge., S.E.1. (3021)

L.C.C. Psychiatric Social Workers reqd. at the Maudsley hospital, Denmark Hill, S.E.5. Candidates must hold Mental Health Cert. of London School of Economics or equiv. qualification. Will be reqd. to co-operate with medical staff in investigating history of mental cases and supervising social welfare of patients. Salary scale—£370 rising to £530 p.a. (comm. salary according to exp.). For application form send stamped add. foolscap env. to Medical Officer of Health (MHS/B), Public Health Dept. (Mental Health Services), County Hall, Westminster Bridge, London, S.E.1. (2947.)

BIRMINGHAM, The University, Department of Extra-Mural Studies. Applics. invited for Organizing Tutor in Herefordshire. Salary, £550-650 p.a.—Final date for applicn. Oct. 18. Further partics. from the Director of Extra-Mural Studies, University, Edmund St. Birmingham, 3.

B.B.C. invites applics. for post of Senior Assistant in Near Eastern Service at Aldenham. Duties of post concerned with supervision of linguistic standards of Arabic and Persian programmes. Very high standard of written and spoken Arabic and Persian essential, together with ability undertake full supervisory responsibility. The holder of post may also be reqd. to participate in programme planning and other operations of Dept. as a whole. Sal. is in grade rising by annual increments of £50 to a max. £1,100 p.a., but the initial appointment may be made on grade rising by annual increments of £40 to a max. of £890 p.a. Detailed applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, W.1, marked "Eastern" within 7 days. For acknowledgement enclose s.a.e.

DORSET C.C. Education Committee applics. invited from suitably qualified candidates for post of Psychiatric Social Worker for work in connection with the Child Guidance Service which is administered by the School Medical Officer. Applicants should possess a certificate in Mental Health work. Salary will be at the rate of £370 p.a. rising by annual increments to £530. Appointment will be subject to the appropriate Superann. Act, and the successful candidate will be required to pass a medical examination. Applics. on the prescribed form, which may be obtained from C. P. Brutton, Clerk of the County Council, Shire Hall, Dorchester, must be forwarded so as to be received by Nov. 1, 1947.

LONDON School of Econs. and Political Science (University of London). Applics. invited for appointment to a Lectureship in Geography. Candidates should mention the aspects of their subject in which they are particularly interested. Sal. £500 p.a. rising to £850 with superann. and educational allowance. Applics., which should be accompanied by the names and addresses of 3 refs., should be forwarded by Oct. 15, to Secretary, London School of Economics, Houghton St. Aldwych, W.C.2, from whom further information may be obtained.

THE National Foundation For Educational Research In England and Wales has vacancies on its staff for persons desirous of undertaking full-time research in education for a period of years. The different fields of research for which investigators are reqd. are: (a) Rewards and Punishments. (b) Visual Aids in Education. (c) Methods of allocation of children to appropriate Secondary School Curricula. (d) Rural Education. It is contemplated that these researches shall be on a very wide scale. Applicants should have had suitable training and exp. In addition they must have successfully carried out a satisfactory piece of research work. Salary will be fixed according to qualifics. and previous exp. Applics., accompanied by testimonials and names of refs., should be addressed to P. D. Innes, Director, 79, Wimpole St. London, W.1, from whom further details of the appointments may be obtained.

MANCHESTER & District Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs, Gaddum House, 16-18 Queen St. Manchester, 2. Organising Secretary is required. Administrative ability and exp. of work in clubs for young people essential. sal. according to qualifics. and exp. Further partics. from Sec.

CHRISTIAN business woman for administrative side of expanding Society. Knowledge of book-keeping and printing. Scope for one interested in staff personnel. Shorthand and typewriting an adv. Age, 28-40. Box 9338.

Appointments Vacant—continued

THE Mullard Radio Valve Co., Ltd., have following vacancies: (1) Engineer to carry out and supervise dynamic measurements and applications experiments on transmitting valves between 10 watt and 20KW anode dissipation and at frequencies up to 300 megacycle per second. Qualifics. reqd.: A.M.I.E.E. or equivalent standard and exp. in this field. (2) Engineer to develop prototype broadcast receivers and amplifiers to demonstrate the application of new ranges of valves. Qualifics. reqd.: A.M.I.E.E. or equiv. standard and exp. in this field. (3) Junior Engineers for carrying out and supervising dynamic measurements or receiving or transmitting valves and for assisting in developing or develop and maintain test gear for these measurements. Qualifics. req.: B.Sc., 1st or 2nd class. Hons. or equiv. Salaries will be in accordance with the Company's scales. Applics., which, in the first place should be in writing only, should state full details of qualifics., past exp. and present salary and should be addressed to Works Personnel Officer, Mullards Radio Valve Co., New Rd. Mitcham Junction, quoting reference "HC."

MOTOR Industry Research Assoc., Gt. West Rd., Brentford, Middx., has vacancy for assist. in technical library. Candidates should not be over 25, and should pref. have attained Registration standard of Library Assoc.; consideration will be given to suitable applics. of Elementary standard who are following course of further study.. Sal. range for qualified assistants is £300—£500 p.a., with superannuation under F.S.S.U. Scheme. Applics. to Director at above address.

TRANSLATOR reqd. by Associated Electrical Industries Research Laboratory, Aldermaston, nr. Reading, for the translation and abstracting of scientific literature (physics, chemistry and elec. engineering) from German and pref. other languages. Apply, giving details of training, experience and salary required, to the Manager.

PUBLISHERS have vacancy for shorthand-typist interested in learning technique of publishng; 5-day week; £300 a year. Box 0385.

VERSATILE teacher immediately for two children, possibly more, ages 9-10, £5 6*s*., plus keep. Generous spare time. Holiday accom. by arrangement. Maxwell, Portquin, Port Isaac, N. Cornwall.

LIBERAL Agent (whole or part-time) wanted for Sussex constituency, man or woman. Box 9339.

SECRETARY, shorthand-typist required for small country business, Burford. Applicants should have some knowledge of accounts and be able to drive. Unfurnished flat available in office premises. Write details of age, exp., and salary required, Box 9566.

PUBLISHING: Young man (29), 2 yrs. exp., some capital, special interests Literature, Politics, Music; fluent Swedish, good French, German; seeks publishing opportunity. Box 9591.

PARLIAMENTARY Secretariat urgently requires Shorthand-Typist. Telephone Mr. Hart, Whi. 6240, Ext. 628.

WANTED practical country-loving woman to share cottage with woman artist and author, car driving an asset, but not essential, interest in cooking, lover of books, music, etc., but particularly country life. Daily help given for "rough." Box 9197.

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WOMAN B.A. Lond. (Hons. French) 4 yrs. teaching, living nr. Uckfield, seeks post within daily travelling distance. Brighton considered. Box 9156.

SENIOR Personal Secy. (lady), exp., Engl. & German shorthand, transl., mod. French, well-ed., lit. abilities, sks. intg. job London w. businessman/executive. Box 9221.

DUTCH girl, 30 years, qualified teacher housekeeping, dietist, experienced cook caterer in institutes, etc., wants position in establishment or school, within 2 hrs. radius from London. Letters to Miss P. Zadoks, Susanna Park 2, Hilversum, Holland.

JOURNALIST, 36, experienced typography, layout, photography, used to editorial responsibility, languages: English, French, German, Czech, reqs. job any capacity. Box 9263.

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